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[GOOD AND EVIL.]

## SNOWFLAKES' SHADOW, SUNBEAMS' SHINE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY OF TWO WORLDS.

### CHAPTER IX.

Mightier far  
Than strength of nerve or sinew, or the sway  
Of magic potent over sun and star,  
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,  
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's  
breast.

WORDSWORTH.

THE brougham drew up at the door of a common-looking house in a small street in Pimlico.

The sonorous summons of the footman, who plied the knocker in a style to which it was little accustomed, brought the landlady to the door, with the further effect of calling together an admiring circle of pale-faced little urchins.

The landlady, who was a large, shabbily dressed woman, with a puffy face and an expression which was a curious compound of vulgar insolence and coarse good humour, had evidently intended to empty the phials of her wrath on the audacious visitor. But the sight of a smart footman, backed by a handsome turnout like the Ducie equipage effected a complete change in her ideas.

"Yes, Mr. Oxford lives here, pore young man—leastways if he can be said to live at all. It's a good deal more like dyin' to my mind."

Rose, whose eager face was visible at the open window of the brougham, heard the words with a terrible sinking at the heart so lately rejoicing in a new-born hope.

"My dear," said Dora, "it will be best for you to ascertain from the description of this woman whether Mr. Oxford be indeed the one of whom we are in search. It is probably an assumed name. So if you don't mind I will leave you for your interview. I have a call to make not far from here, after which I will come back, take you up, and leave you at your own home."

Rose, grateful for the counsel and kindness of her benefactor, stepped from the carriage and did as she had been advised.

The landlady was less deferential to the humble and plainly dressed seamstress. Still the glimpse she had caught of Dora Ducie, with her aristocratic face and air, and her mantle of rich furs, satisfied the woman that if her present questioner was poor she possessed at least friends or protectors who were wealthy.

Yes, Mr. Oxford was a tall, dark young man of about twenty.

He was a gentleman—leastways he allus conducted hisself and spoke as sich, and she allus spoke as she found.

He was a painter too—sich times as he could afford to buy any paint and his hand was stiddy enough to 'old his painting-brush.

It was sufficient.

Rose could not doubt that her lover was found.

She returned to the carriage window and told Miss Ducie the result of her colloquy with the landlady.

"Ah, that is well. Shall I call for you in an hour? Will that be long enough for your tête-à-tête after such a long separation?" asked the young lady, with an arch, pleasant smile.

Rose assented.

"Do not tell him of our meeting, dear. Perhaps I may see him myself on my return. But if you find his circumstances are not prosperous assure him of better times. Mamma and our circle of friends can find Mr.—Mr. Oxford plenty of commissions."

Rose turned away with a swelling of the throat aroused by the grateful emotion that the kindness of her newly-found friend produced, and passed into the passage of the house.

"It ain't a bit of use for one to go and ask 'im if he'll see you," said the landlady. "He's that strange at times when he's been ill and 'ad to take a rewiver or two that he'd as like as not chuck a paintin'-brush or a more-ill-stick as he calls it at my 'ead. Sometimes he won't see nobody—nor eat—nor—oh, yes, he'll allus drink fast enough. I was goin' to put my foot in it there."

Rose's heart sank at the words.

She dared not tell herself that she understood the woman's meaning.

Perhaps the landlady guessed what was passing in the girl's mind.

"Oh, you needn't look frightened, miss. He can be a gentleman when he likes. Pore young man! It's a thousand pities. Trouble druv 'im to take a drop o' comfort and— Well, I won't say no more, though he does owe me five weeks' rent and three arf-crowns wot I lent 'im."

Oh, the humiliation of poor, proud Rose! This her gallant young lover of yore! It could not be!

Yet the description tallied. She would at least see this Mr. Oxford.

"You go right upstairs, miss—second floor back. Give a 'ard knock with your knuckles and

he'll think it's me with a cup of tea. Then when he speaks walk right in."

Rose ascended the creaking, uncarpeted stairs and tapped at the door indicated.

A thick, uneven voice told her to enter.

She opened the door and stepped into the room.

It was a small chamber, cold and cheerless, its sole furniture consisting of a deal table, two Windsor chairs, a broken washstand, and one of those mysterious, old-fashioned bedsteads known as "press," which double themselves up into a supposed but deceptive likeness to a chest of drawers or cheffonier.

Beside these an easel, supporting a partially executed oil-painting, a few plaster casts of various portions of the human anatomy, and sundry etoeteras of the painter's art, were scattered about.

A mingled odour of oil, stale tobacco smoke and whiskey filled the close apartment.

Sitting over the wretched fire, on the hob by which stood a tumbler half full of some liquor, was a tall man whose bent back and the slack manner in which his garments hung on him gave the impression of age or sickness.

His back was towards the entrance, and he said as he heard the door closed, in a thick, querulous tone:

"Now, Mrs. Bourne, do you mean to kill a fellow? I can't work, you know I can't, till I get that tea, and here you keep me waiting like this."

"Mr. Oxford," said Rose, softly.

"Heavens! Who is that?"

The man sprang to his feet with a start and faced his visitor.

A young-old man. His forehead crossed by deep lines, his cheeks sunken, his whole countenance emaciated by insufficient food and by dissipation.

The girl recoiled. Could this be the handsome youth who had won her heart in the happy days which now seemed to recede to so dim a distance?

Was this pallid, haggard, neglected-looking man the brilliant student, the polished gentleman, first of his college in all, from the honours examination to the strokeship of his college's boat and the captaincy of their cricket team?

Yes.

Woman's undying love could still trace in the faded lineaments the well-known traits of yore.

The man put one hand over his haggard eyes and motioned Rose back with the other, as though he had been warding off some menacing spectre.

"Rose Dacre?" he said, in a tremulous, questioning tone.

"Yes, Ronald, Rose Dacre—your own Rose! Oh, Ronald," the girl continued, as he still maintained his attitude of repulsion, advancing and taking possession of his extended hand, "look at me! What means this?"

The young man allowed the thin hand which the girl had clasped in both her own delicate palms to remain in her grasp, but still covered his eyes.

"Leave me, Rose! Leave the outcast, the reprobate. This is no place—I am no companion for you."

"Ronald, look at me! Tell me not to go! Ah! through how many weary hours, with what bitter tears have I not longed for this hour! With what fervent petitions have I not prayed Heaven for it! It is all otherwise to what I had fondly dreamed. But all that is as naught so that I see you once more—hold your hand again and hear your voice."

She broke into a fit of passionate sobbing.

The young man removed his hand and looked at her with a half-dazed expression, but made no reply.

"How I have sought you, Ronald. As the weary weeks went by I have often—so often—despaired of ever discovering you; but at last Providence has been merciful, and I see you face to face."

And she strove to clasp her arms around his neck.

He, however, detained the girl at arm's length.

"Rose," he said, with a gloomy calm, "we must speak no more of the buried past. In the hour when I sent you that letter informing you that I was the son of a forger—a felon—that I was a living lie, whose position, whose garb, nay, whose very bread was bought by the proceeds of robbery the vilest that man can conceive—the links which bound us were broken for ever."

"You at least were innocent," broke in Rose.

"Innocent—yes! But could I ask her whom I loved to unite her fate with that of a branded outcast—a man with a tainted name—a felon sire?"

"What are these to me, Ronald? What is aught on earth? I would give my very life for thee. The sneers of the world are as nothing to such love as mine. Did I not know that you were ever noble and good?"

"Speak not of the dead past," cried the youth, vehemently. "Speak not of it, Rose, if you would not drive me mad. I dare not think of it. When in the lonely watches of the night thoughts arise of olden days and of you there is but one refuge for me from quick-coming madness!"

"Ronald!"

The word was dwelt upon by the girl's clear, sweet voice so lovingly, with such a depth of infinite pity, as to have melted a heart of stone.

"What you describe me I was once," went on Ronald, with cynical bitterness. "What I am now you partly see yet scarcely can realise. I am not a malefactor as is the father who has cursed my wasted life. The stern grip of the law is not on my throat—the maledictions of the defrauded and homeless ones ring not in my ears. From this last iniquity I am clear. But look at me, Rose, my lost love, and judge what I am—lost to thee and lost to Heaven!"

"Never to me, Ronald—thine and thine only for ever more."

The girl broke down the fence of his repelling arm, she clasped him in a long embrace, and turned her sad, beautiful face up to his worn countenance with a look of undying affection.

"It must not be, Rose—it can never be! What am I? The outcast Pariah from the world—a pauper, a desperate libertine—a hopeless drunkard!"

"No more, Ronald" cried Rose, in an imploring tone. "No further words of self-accusation to me! Whatever you are you are mine! My lot in life is to be by your side. And—oh, I will strive so hard to save you, my darling! If in dull despair at the painful inheritance of wrong which you have had to bear you have sought oblivion of misery in evil ways let me—the little Rose of happier days—be to you a guide and guardian until once more the old proud heights be gained on which you stood when you taught me, the wayward schoolgirl, the glory and beauty of the world—when from the stars above alike with the bright flowers beneath you told me of their lore—when sage and bard gave me their wisdom or their wit, rendered still sweeter and more glorious in that it passed through your lips."

The young man stood silent.

"I will stand by you in every trial, Ronald, and aid you again to rise up in the narrow and difficult path of right. I will be by you, my darling, when temptation comes to you—I will help you in the practice of your self-chosen and glorious art until—under your new name—you stand before the world with a proud title to fame like that of the olden masters."

"Fame! you know but little of the world. Rose, to talk thus wildly. Scarce can my poor efforts earn the barest pittance. True, I want no more. It is sufficient for me if they furnish but the means of forgetfulness."

He waved his hand meaningly and mournfully towards the half-emptied glass which stood on the hob of the fireplace.

"Do not believe it," said the girl, with energy. "You must cast off the thralldom of these habits, which cripple your genius and blight your highest efforts. You must nourish a new life, the life of hope in your heart, and your work shall share the fresh brightness of your spirit and

become a thing meet to command men's admiration and homage."

"Do not tempt me with such dreams. What is fame to me, an outcast?"

"Let love be then the motive. You loved me once, Ronald!"

"Once and for ever," responded the young man, with passionate emphasis.

"Then what shall separate us? Let me share your lot, Ronald, for weal or woe."

The young man looked earnestly on the imploring face of the girl.

Its sad, pathetic beauty shook his determination.

He noted too with loving pity how worn and wasted her features were, how poor and thin her apparel.

The dull, despairing look of his face seemed to lighten and the hard eyes to soften as he gazed.

His arm stole around the waist of the girl who clung to him.

"You would share my lot then, Rose?"

"Yes, whatever it may be."

"Link yourself to a felon's son?"

"To the man I love."

"You can endure poverty, hunger, cold, the world's scorn?"

"All—with you!"

"My love!—my own little Rose!—it shall be so! We will fight the battle together, and for your sake and with your aid I will be strong! Yet—and he looked round despairingly—"how hopeless it all is! I remain even in this miserable home by the mercy of that vulgar woman whose tenant I am. For three days I have not touched pencil or brush, because poverty precludes me from obtaining the necessary materials. You are scarcely less poor, I fear. Where then shall be our home and when our wedding-day?"

A touch of bitter scorn mingled with the last despairing words.

"I am poor, Ronald, as you say," rejoined the girl. "But what I have is yours."

And taking out the few shillings, she pressed her purse containing the gold into the young man's hand.

"There is sufficient, Ronald," she went on, "to settle your landlady's claim and something more. I speak not of a wedding-day. Leave that to a merciful future. But resolve to play a man's part. Cast off the evil habits that have enthralled you and turn to your art with full purpose of resolution. I will see you often—and, Ronald," she added, "in token of future better days I will make a prophecy which will be fulfilled."

A hopeful look had come to Ronald's face at her words—a ring in his voice more like that of the light-hearted youth of yore—as he replied:

"And that is——"

"That I will bring you your first commission—the herald I hope of many more."

A subdued murmur of voices, which had sounded for the past few minutes in the passage below, grew more distinct and appeared to be ascending the stairs.

Engrossed in their own converse neither Ronald nor Rose had given attention to the sound; but now as a man's deep voice could be heard distinctly, speaking angrily and with fierce imprecations, Ronald started back from the girl with sudden terror, his face blanching to a deathly hue.

"A lady with him! One doesn't find ladies the guests of such as he—or you, my good woman," the voice said, derisively.

Then as a torrent of the landlady's wrath welled forth the door of Ronald's room was opened without the ceremony of any summons for admittance, and a man entered.

The intruder was an individual beyond middle age, with a face repulsive from its extreme sternness of expression.

His iron-grey moustache and hair were closely cut and his apparel, visible under a thick great-coat, was of the extreme style of Parisian elegance—two diamond rings of price sparkling on his ungloved right hand.



The young man staggered back helplessly with a doubting, affrighted cry:  
"My father!"

It was indeed Gaston Mowbray!

## CHAPTER X.

Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay;  
And if in death still lovely, lovelier there;  
Far lovelier! Pity swells the tide of love.  
YOUNG.

THE Maori pah, or fortress of Rua-peka-peka, or the "Bata's Nest," was well placed for all purposes of defensive warfare.

Nearly surrounded by thick woods, laced together tightly by a labyrinth of creeping plants, beyond which ran a deep, rocky ravine, it was almost impossible to assail the fortalice by means of artillery, and equally difficult to gain it by a coup-de-main.

The New Zealander, a born warrior, and acting on his own instincts with some little knowledge gained from the white man, constructs defensive works which would not disgrace a European engineer.

The Bata's Nest, in which the unfortunate Englishmen were now secured, was an excellent example of the kind. The glacis, the pickets, the curtains loopholed for musketry, the trenches and covered ways, the traverses to guard against ricochet of besiegers' cannon-balls, all argued possession of a degree of military knowledge marvellous in rude savages.

Notwithstanding their desperate position, Horace Mowbray could not refrain from an admiring glance at the massive stockade of mighty trees bound together by tenacious cables of flax through which he was hurried.

The pah was full of subterranean cells, into which the savages could retreat if a bomb-shell were thrown within their fortress.

The captives were led to one of these crypts and compelled to descend the notched pole which forms the New Zealander's staircase.

Arrived at the bottom of the pit, no time was lost by the half-dozen Maories who escorted Mowbray and his fellow captive in securing their ankles to a huge log of wood at some distance from each other and tying tightly the prisoners' hands behind their backs with flax-leaves. Then, reascending the rude staircase, they left the Pakehas to their reflections.

These could not be otherwise than bitter in either case. Death, though put off for a short space, was none the less inevitable, nor was there hope that any titlle of the accompanying tortures might be spared. Life too was doubly endeared to one of the men by his youth and to the other by a freshly-awakened hope, a newly-discovered tie.

For a long space the captives preserved silence. They were secured to the logs in such sort that it was only by painful effort that they could see each other, and nothing but the laboured respiration of each—caused by the pain from their bonds, which sank deep into the flesh—could be heard in the deserted pit.

Horace Mowbray was the first to speak. Hardened as he was to ill fortune during long, despairing years, it was not possible that he could forget that his companion owed his present position, his impending doom, to the noble effort which he had made for the safety of a stranger.

"My friend," Horace Mowbray began, in a voice not without a trace of deep emotion, "there are few reasons why I should feel regret that I must soon perish at the hands of the howling demons who brought us hither; but my soul is sorely wrong for you—that I, an unknown man, who had no claim upon your kind offices, should be the cause of this evil fate that has befallen you."

"Soldier," replied the young man, "for you also to me are nameless, it needs not you should feel sorrow for me. However few the links that bind you to the life of earth, the ties which attach me to it are fewer still. There is but one alone for whom I could care to live—and by that one I am I doubt not unremembered now."

The infinite sadness which thrilled through the few quiet words affected Mowbray strangely.

"Yet you are young, my friend, and life holds much of promise for youth."

"Not for me."

There was a curtness in the reply which seemed to forbid further converse.

"It is needless to ask," said Mowbray, after a long interval of silence, "if there is any hope of mercy—of reprieve."

"There is none."

"The expeditionary force must reach this place to-morrow. If we be living then we may be rescued."

"We shall not be living when it arrives before this place, and it will take much time to reduce the fort, even if the Maories do not beat off their assailants."

"That could scarcely be."

"I do not know. They are very numerous, and well armed. They will fight here with courage not inferior to that of our own race. But to you and me this matters little. Ere the charging cheer of an English storming party peals through this dark forest there will be naught remaining of you and me save a little pile of polished bones."

Mowbray shuddered involuntarily at the cold, assured tone.

"Surely, young man," he said, with an accent of keen rebuke, "you have not lifted hand against your countrymen nor shared even by your presence in the fiendish orgies which have so often marked a captive's doom?"

"Never!" cried the youth, fiercely. "For what do you take me?"

"I ask pardon. I might have known that one who perilled his life for a stranger could not have aided in such ruthless deeds."

"Yet these men have been deeply wronged," said the youth. "They have been too often cheated out of the lands which their race has held for long generations. They have been subjected to the white man's contumelious spoliation and cruel insult. What wonder then that they should turn against the wronger with the vengeful acts of the savage?"

"From your language," Mowbray said, "I should think you were one of those few whose warped and erring instincts have urged them to flee from their own kin and make common cause with the enemies of their race."

"Not so," responded the youth, with angry earnestness. "There at least I have done my country no wrong."

Neither seemed to care for further speech and each lapsed into the companionship of his own sad thoughts.

The weary hours passed, and the shadows of twilight drew on.

At intervals bursts of savage revelry fell upon the prisoners' ears, but no one came near to offer food or water to the parched lips or some little respite of loosened bonds to the cramped and tortured limbs.

"Soldier," said the young man, suddenly, as one of the outbursts of yells and uncouth shouts died away in the distance, "is it true that Major Ducie is in New Zealand and connected with the expeditionary force?"

Tight as were his bonds Horace Mowbray gave a start perceptible to the querist.

"He was," responded the soldier, slowly. "But he is dead! He fell in the assault of the pah."

"Dead! Good heavens! Poor Dora!"

"Dora!"

Where had Horace Mowbray heard that name? A light broke upon him. The dying breath of his foe had breathed the word.

"Dora?" said Mowbray, inquiringly—"Dora Ducie?"

It was the youth's turn to feel surprise.

"Yes. Can you tell me aught of her?"

"Nothing, save that Major Ducie died with the name upon his lips. Is she his daughter?"

"Yes."

"You know her?"

"I did and pity her."

"She has a mother left to guard and guide her."

"Say rather to curse her!"

"What?" cried Mowbray, in a tone of con-

centrated surprise. "What wrong have you suffered at Mrs. Ducie's hands that you should speak thus?"

"You shall learn, for your lips will never be able to repeat the tale, and its telling may while away some of the moments of waiting worse than death itself. You asked but now whether I had fled to the Kainga of the Maories. I did not. I am one of those unhappy men whom, for crimes against her laws, our country sends across the seas! I left my native shores with a strong resolve to live a new life. It was said—I do not say it—that in that floating inferno, a convict ship, my conduct was exemplary. When the wretched refugees of outcasts, the prison sheds of Tasmania, were reached I held on to my resolution with the tenacity of a bull-dog. Here, too, I gained golden opinions, but one official—high in rank, but a cruel tyrant at heart—conceived an unmerited hatred for me. He made my very life a torture, till flesh and blood could endure no more. I made my escape. As a stowaway I left the Tasmanian shore and reached this country. Skulking from the settlements of Englishmen, I was captured by the insurgent Maories, who showed me much kindness and allowed me freedom in their midst, and—here I am."

"But you would like to know how this relates to Mrs. Ducie. You shall hear. I am nearly connected with her by blood. I had a strong claim upon her love. As a child I fell into evil hands. A man vile and criminal reared me as his own son and as a thief. I had no training save that which the dregs of humanity could give in evil ways. I fell into the grasp of the law. The man who had been my tutor fled—a murderer! Who would care to devote a thought to the young human wolf at war with his fellows? He who lies still and cold on yonder battle ground was one to do so—a gentle girl who could not forget the ties of blood-relation was another!"

"For the love of Heaven, stop!" cried Mowbray, in a shriek of agony. "Do not say that that relationship was from her mother!"

"Yes, Dora Ducie and I have nestled in the same bosom—far apart in time—how much farther in love."

"And he—the man who led you into evil courses—his name was—"

"Gaston Mowbray!"

"Oh, pitying Heaven, be merciful! I am indeed an accursed man! My son! my son! doomed twice by your father's sin!"

"Man, you must be mad! My father died—died a suicide's death—before I was born!"

"He did not. Horace Mowbray lives—and is that most wretched man who now speaks."

"Is it possible?"

"It is too true. As Ducie died in my arms yester even he told me I had a son, but told no more—and now I meet that son thus. Fate is indeed merciless."

The young captive's head drooped upon his breast and his brain whirled dizzily. Surely it was true. Something in the soldier's voice had struck him as being strangely familiar.

Now he understood it—the intonations were those of Gaston Mowbray, with a subtle difference.

"My son," said Horace Mowbray, in an humble and tremulous voice, "I am the miserable cause of this terrible ending of your young life. You have been deeply sinned against. Father, mother, uncle, all have wrought you evil. But I, as a dying man, ask your forgiveness for my share of the wrong. Look at me once, my boy—look at me but once—and not with hate!"

Percy Mowbray raised his head and gazed at his father's face with tear-blurred eyes.

"Father," he said, brokenly, "for I feel that you are my father, you have my full forgiveness—if indeed you have wronged me. I know little of the motives which moved you to act as you have done, but me you have not purposely wronged."

"Heaven bless you, my son!"

The silence of the night reigned around, the stars of the South, with that glorious constellation to which the earlier navigators gave the

title of the symbol of our faith, shone down through the opening by which the captives had descended, and that glittering crucifix of heaven gleamed as a sign of a higher forgiveness than that of man.

The Maories lay sleeping outside the pah in their huts, for they did not avail themselves of the fort save when a foe was near.

But as the two men exchanged these last words a dark form appeared at the margin of the pit and peered below.

Then it descended the ladder swiftly, and a bright glitter in the starlight told the two men that the visitor's right hand held a blade of shining steel.

Both captives prepared themselves for death—swift death—more welcome to them than slow dissolution under the torturer's hands.

"Good-bye, my son!"

"Good-bye, father!"

Swift farewells are the quick knife should pierce each heart.

"Peace, Tu-where-where," said a woman's voice, adding, in Maori, "Not a word, but follow me—you and your companion."

The knife-blade fell across the bonds of wrist and ankle, and each of the captives stood free, though with numbed and well-nigh powerless limbs.

"I will save you, Tu-where-where, or die with you," whispered the girl—none other than she who had clung around Percy in the tumult of the previous night, and who was Ngarauunga's favourite daughter. "Follow!"

As well as their cramped limbs would permit both men ascended the ladder, and their deliverer led the way across the deserted pah to an opening in the wall of piled trunks which formed a picket twenty feet in height.

From behind a heap of flax leaves the girl drew a couple of soldier's muskets, with their accompanying cartouche boxes and two small steel axes and handed them to Percy and his father.

"Do not slay my people except to save your own lives," she said, simply. "Tread cautiously."

The girl led on between the huts. Over the horizon a portion of the rising moon loomed largely, and against her disc the form of a Maori sentinel leaning upon his gun stood out in the distance.

On they passed safely until the edge of the thick forest was gained.

"You will return, Koe-Koe?" said the younger man, in Maori.

"No. I will guide you through the forest."

"But you will be missed. Your father's anger will be terrible when you go back."

"He would slay me with the meri-ponamoo. But I will not return. I will go with Tu-where-where to the Kainga of the Pakehas, and be his wyenee."

And she clung fondly to the youth's arm.

"It cannot be, Koe-Koe. I want no wife. My lot on earth is to wander. You have saved my life, poor girl, at the risk of your own. Return, I beg of you."

"No. You would be lost in the great wood. If I may not be your wyenee I will be your slave."

She took his hand and pressed it tenderly to her lips.

"Hasten! We have far to go ere the moon throws the tree shadows towards the pah."

Finding further remonstrance useless, Percy reluctantly permitted the Maori girl still to guide them.

They had made considerable progress, despite the tangled thickness of the forest, when a terrible sound assailed their ears—the shouts of pursuers!

The Maories had discovered their escape!

The fugitives could already hear the savages crashing through the underwood and occasionally purposely firing shots into its sombre depths.

The trio crept on as noiselessly as possible with quickly beating hearts and bated breath—when suddenly a report proceeded from the left hand and Koe-Koe gave a little cry.

It was suppressed instantly, but, pressing her

hand upon her naked breast the girl sank down in the matted foliage that carpeted their path.

Percy knelt over her.

"It has not struck me," Koe-Koe!" he whispered—"Dear Koe-Koe, speak!"

"Yes, it has killed me," she replied, simply.

The young man placed his hand on hers and felt the quick-coming blood which flowed from her wounded bosom.

"Good-bye, Tu-where-where! This is best. If I could not be thy wyenee it is well to die! My skin is dark, but I loved thee as well as if it had been white as a pi-pi shell. Follow the course to the moon until at her highest. Then to the right. Kill not my people. Good-bye."

She pressed Percy's hand with a tender yet convulsive clasp, and he bent his face to hers and kissed her on brow and lips, murmuring fond expressions of reciprocal affection which the noble girl's devotion had awakened.

One last passionate caress, one little shiver, and the spirit of the simple Maori girl had fled!

(To be Continued.)

## THE WEeping WILLOW.

"Weeping willow, weeping willow,  
Why for ever do you sway,  
And trail your tresses, as a mourner  
Bows through sorrow's first dark  
day?"

"What have you lost with vanished  
summer?  
Not the green grass at your feet,  
Smile, or kiss, of golden sunshine,  
Brook-song, ringing clear and sweet."

"Why do I trail my mournful tresses,  
Making road-ways in the dew,  
Tearing spiders' gem-hung bridges,  
With my eager fingers through?"

"Ah! I'm looking, sadly seeking,  
For the daisies' starry eyes,  
Missing sore their tender glances,  
For their loss I breathe my sighs."

"Oh, weeping willow, weeping willow,  
Look no more beneath your feet,  
The silver stars are there no longer,  
Though you sweep each grassy street."

"Though the clouds above you, rifted  
By the wild winds' work and will,  
See! their starry faces shining  
Out of reach of earthly ill."

"There no careless foot can crush them,  
Never frosty sickle smite.  
Robber steal their treasure golden,  
Nor evil touch their robe of white."  
E. L.

## SCIENCE.

### PRODUCTION OF SALT IN ENGLAND.

Of the many minerals raised in the kingdom few play a more important part, or are less noticed, than that which is found in every household throughout the land—salt. It is an essential that we could not dispense with, not only as a culinary ingredient, but in many other ways. Our resources, too, are such that they have not only been fully equal to the wants of our own population, but we have been able to spare yearly from 200,000 to 250,000 tons to other countries that are not so favoured as ourselves.

There are districts in many parts of the country where salt could be met with were such necessary, for, some time since, whilst boring near Middlesborough, in the expectation of meeting with the coal measures, rock salt was met with at a depth of 1,800 feet.

At the Moira Colliery, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire, at a depth of 593 feet, salt water, beautifully clear, trickles down from

the fissures where the coal is being worked. The brine is taken to Ashby, and has been in good repute for rheumatic and other complaints.

As to the origin of salt, there are many theories, but it may be stated that in nearly all substances, wherever found, it is in the new red sandstone.

By many it is believed that the formations are due to the evaporation of the water from inland salt lakes or parts of the sea severed from the main body of the ocean by volcanic action, the evaporation causing the deposit held in solution by the sea.

Writing more recently on the subject of the great European salt deposits, Mr. T. Ward propounds a rather different theory. He considers that the salt deposits owe their origin entirely to the elevation of the mountain chains with which they are so intimately connected, during which small valleys and ravines would be cut off from connection with the sea by ridges of land, and would form salt lakes and lagoons. Cheshire is still the main source from which we draw our own supplies, and export to the United States, Russia, and other countries. There we have had considerable landslips in working it, but there are the red rocks showing keuper or saliferous marl, with thin beds of limestone, and then 200 feet of rock salt.

In Worcestershire, at Droitwich and Stoke Prior, the salt is made from brine alone. A large proportion of what is made at Norwich, Middlewich, and Winsford, in Cheshire, is sent down the river Weaver, the quantity in 1857 having been 772,175 tons, and in 1866 it had increased to 1,118,991 tons. During the last 20 years, however, the increase in the production has been of a most marked character, whilst the price has gone down very much.

In 1855 the salt raised in the kingdom was 1,094,770 tons, the average price at the works being about dols. 6 per ton. 1875 there was raised 2,316,644 tons of salt, the price being barely dols. 3.60 per ton. The value of the salt exported in 1855 was dols. 1,738,570, and in 1875 it was only dols. 860,255, when our exports were 916,468 tons, or nearly as much as the entire produce of the kingdom in the former year. Our principal customers include the United States, British India, British North America, and Russia.

From the figures given it will be seen that nearly 40 per cent. of the salt produced in the kingdom is exported to other countries.—"Mining Journal."

### A SIMPLE METHOD OF VENTILATING ROOMS.

Dr. H. N. DOWD informs us that he has found the following plan very satisfactory for the ventilation of rooms that are much used during cold weather:

Nail or screw a neat strip of wood, from one to two inches high, upon the window sill, just inside of the sash and extending entirely across from one side of the window frame to the other. Upon the top of this strip fasten a piece of ordinary "weather strip," so that there will be formed an air-tight joint between the "weather strip" and the lower sash of the window, whether the latter is shut down tight or raised an inch or two, the lower cross-piece of the sash sliding on the rubber of the "weather strip" as the sash rises.

With this simple fixture in place, the lower sash may be raised enough to admit a stream of air between the lower and upper sashes, where they lap over each other at the middle of the window, without admitting the least air at the window sill.

The air admitted between the sashes is thrown directly up toward the ceiling, and there mixes with the heated air at the upper part of the room.

The room is thereby ventilated in a thorough and agreeable manner. The fixture should be applied to several windows in a room. The amount of ventilation may be regulated by the distance that the lower sash is raised. This arrangement is cheap, simple, and effective.





[A LITTLE MUSIC.]

## A WOMAN SPURNED.

### CHAPTER XVII.

And I knew not why, but over my soul  
A sudden and dark foreboding stole.

AGNES sat down on the sofa beside her aunt, and gave her all the particulars of her brief tour, hoping to amuse and enliven her by doing so; and the professor availed himself of the opportunity of private speech with Manvers to draw him towards one of the windows and ask, with some embarrassment:

"Have you known Mr. Brenton many years, Julian? I—I mean do you think you understand him thoroughly?"

"I thought you were aware, sir, that Brenton and myself were boys together. I used to fight his battles when we were at school, and help him out with his tasks, for he never was very fond of study. I hardly know how the intimacy which led to our partnership began. I liked him well enough, but I had no particular partiality for him as we grew old enough to choose our associates.

"He fastened himself on me, I suppose, and I yielded to his influence. It was unfortunate for me that I did so, for I was persuaded by him to risk all I had saved, in that unfortunate business of ours. He was no more to blame for the failure than I was, and it gave both of us a good lesson.

"Our present venture is safer and sounder every way, and I have a little doubt that we shall be successful in our efforts this time. I think I have answered your question fully and to the point, professor."

"Well—yes—so you have, but you have not enlightened me as to your present estimate of your partner. Your confidence in him was evidently unshaken by your first disaster under his management; but what have you thought of him since he treated my wife and myself as

ciphers in arranging his marriage with our niece?"

A slight cloud came over the face of the young man.

"I had rather not talk of that, sir. Brenton was guilty of great disrespect to both you and Mrs. Tardy, and I resented his conduct at the time, though there was no opportunity to manifest the feeling. With time, it has died away, and it will be best for all of us to condone the offence and be good friends when we meet."

"Yes—yes—that is well enough as far as it goes. I have no wish to make discord between you and your partner, but there is something that I must tell you which has become known to me since you went away."

"Pray, spare me all further preparation, professor, and tell me what Brenton has done to incur the disapprobation of yourself and Mrs. Tardy."

"It is connected with the young lady who just now left the room with Kirke. Have you any recollection of having seen or heard of her before this evening?"

"None whatever, except the mention made in Mrs. Tardy's letter to Agnes, that Miss Deering had been thrown on her protection in a rather romantic way, and she intended to keep her as a companion. What had Brenton to do with her advent in this house?"

"A great deal, as you shall hear."

The old gentleman then related to Manvers all that had taken place with reference to Constance on the day of his own departure from Selwood. He listened with vivid interest, and after a pause, said:

"The name did not strike me at first, and I did not remember ever having heard it before. But while you were speaking the wasted phantom of a man called Deering once in my presence, arose before me.

"Broken down in health and fortune, he came to the office, and I remember that Brenton told me he had been a friend of his mother's, and that old memories gave him a claim on him which could not be set aside. The poor old

fellow never came again, and I suppose he died. That was about a year ago."

"Exactly—he died shortly after you saw him, and his daughter is still wearing mourning for him. Did you hear anything that passed between Deering and your partner? Was no allusion made to the debt Brenton still persists in denying?"

"Their conversation was private, and after he went away, Brenton said to me: 'There is a poor fellow who has ventured his all in speculation, and now that he is cornered, he comes to me to help him out. I have done it before, for the sake of old times, and I could not resist him to day, unreasonable as his request was. I let him have a few hundreds of my own money, as I think he will pull through this time. If he comes again, I think I must shut down on him, though.'"

"After what I have told you, do you think he spoke the truth?" asked the professor, with some solicitude. "I am most anxious not to be unjust to Mr. Brenton. At the same time, I am convinced in my own mind that the money given to Mr. Deering was his own, and that he would never have been aided by so selfish a man as your partner if he had really stood in need of assistance."

Manvers was silent a few moments; at length he reluctantly replied:

"I am afraid I must agree with you that the whole of this affair is not to Brenton's credit; yet I think it fair to give him the benefit of a doubt. He may have lost the money, as he states, but it was most unfair to Miss Deering to act as you say he did toward her. I do not suppose that he ever really meant to marry her."

"Of course not; but she was not deceived by his pretended love-making. She only kept on terms with him in the hope that she could bring him to a fair settlement. When he married Emma, she took affairs into her own hands, with what results I have told you. You may think it strange that we took up Miss Deering's cause as we did, but there is something about

the young lady herself which wins confidence and respect, and both Mrs. Tardy and myself were disgusted with Brenton's shuffling and evasions. I reiterate my warning, Julian; be on your guard against any evil turn he may do you. Ruined once by his management something worse may happen to you if you are not careful in your dealings with so unscrupulous a man as Brenton seems to be."

"I do not know that anything worse than ruin could befall a man," said Manvers, in a constrained tone; "but I promise to remember what you have said, dear sir; it is my purpose hereafter to take my share in the management of our financial affairs, and not leave them exclusively to Brenton as I have hitherto done. I must say for him that he has done his part admirably, and we are prospering finely. We have had no disagreement except on one subject, and that is the recent employment of a man in whom I have no confidence. When we meet we shall settle about that, and if he persists in keeping John Markley in his service it will afford me an excuse for retiring from the firm if I find it will be to my interest to do so."

The professor nodded approvingly:

"Never be in too great a hurry about things. Take time to look at every side, and then make up your mind. Keep the reins well in your own hands if you can. If you find that impossible get out of the firm, taking with you all that belongs to you. That is my advice, and I think it is sound."

"Thanks, dear sir, for the interest you take in my affairs. I promise to remember what you have said, and to be guided by your advice if I find that my partner is not entirely worthy of trust."

"That is settled, then," said the professor, cheerfully. "And now, having placed the affair in your hands, I leave you to manage in your own way. Let us join the ladies, for the sound of my dear child's voice is as music in my ears. I cannot tell you how much I have missed her, though Constance has done her best to fill her place."

"I hardly think that anyone can do that," said Manvers, with the pride in his darling which led him to believe that his Agnes was without a peer among women.

Presently Kirke and Constance came in and joined them, and the conversation became general.

Manvers was interested in what he had heard of Miss Deering, and he was struck with the graceful simplicity of her manner, and the expression of sincerity which gave a charm to her sweet face, more attractive than even perfect beauty of features.

He saw clearly that Kirke had found consolation for his defeat with Emma, and he marvelled if these two would find in each other that happiness and perfect union which he had learned to prize so highly during his brief experience of married life.

He was far more in love with his wife than he had been with his betrothed, and in the fulness of his content he thought that no lot in life could be more blessed than his own.

Young, strong, full of energy and hope, with a prosperous career opening before him, cheered on by the tender companionship of the woman he adored, he thought himself secure of all the good gifts of life, and thanked the Giver of all good for the pleasant paths in which his lines had fallen.

Exult not in good fortune lest it desert thee, oh child of earth, for sunshine and shadow are inseparable!

He was oblivious of the warning he had so lately received, and dreamed not that the machinations of a spiteful woman had already laid the axe to the root of his prosperity, and his downfall prepared by her ruthless hands.

Before retiring they had some music, and Agnes sang all her uncle's favourite songs. He had missed them much during her absence, for Constance was not a musician, though she could chant a score of old ballads in a sweet, clear-toned voice.

Kirke did not announce his intention to leave for a few hours in the morning, but his habits

were so eccentric that few comments were made at the breakfast table on his unexpected departure.

Mrs. Tardy was so unwell that she did not appear, and her niece was so occupied with her that Constance had complete away downstairs, ordering and arranging things to suit herself.

This was well, she told herself, though her heart ached for the suffering of the poor old lady, whom change of rooms did not seem to have materially benefited.

Dr. Morton was summoned to her assistance, and the case, so far as it was understood, submitted to him.

He looked grave, ordered his remedies, and drove away, saying that he would call again on the following morning.

Constance watched his departure, saying to herself:

"After all, I shall be the one to save her. In return for her sweet trust in me, for her benevolent wish to serve me, I will give her back life and health. Oh, how thankful my heart is for the chance to show my gratitude to those good people for all their kindness to me."

She despatched the boy who attended to the dining-room on some errand which would detain him several hours, and then threw away the wine sent by Brenton, and carefully washed the bottles in which it had been kept.

At twelve o'clock Kirke drove up to the back door with a basket on the seat beside him, and a small keg at his feet.

Constance ran out, took the basket, and vanished again before anyone appeared to take charge of the vehicle.

The half dozen bottles of wine he had brought to replace those destroyed were quickly arranged in their places, and from one of them the decanter was partially filled and put in its place on the sideboard.

The professor, hearing the sound of wheels, came out to see who had driven up the back way, and Kirke said to him as he lifted the keg:

"I had to go to town on business of importance, and while I was there it occurred to me that Mrs. Tardy's supply of wine might give out, so I took the liberty to bring her some. This is pure, and of the best vintage, and I hope it will be of immense service to her."

"You are very thoughtful," said the old gentleman, sadly, "and we are much obliged, but I fear that the use of this wine has not benefited my wife. She took some yesterday, and she is worse to-day; she is unable to get up; and Morton seems to think the case a serious one."

Kirke took in the keg of wine himself, followed by the professor.

He placed it on the pantry floor, and brushing the dust from his clothes, gravely replied:

"I am sorry to hear that, sir, but I hope that Mrs. Tardy will soon be better now. Indeed I am almost certain she will. Let her try my wine. It is perfectly pure; I took care to ascertain that, and Brenton may not have been so thoughtful."

"That is true," replied the professor, absently, for his thoughts had wandered to his wife's sick room, and he moved away like one in a dream.

Constance came forward in a pretty morning dress.

She said, with emotion:

"We shall save her yet to those that love her, Mr. Kirke. The dear professor is alarmed and depressed, but we who know what is the cause of this illness, can hope to see her soon restored to health, now that the cause will be removed. How much I thank you!—how grateful I am to you."

"I want your love, not your gratitude, Constance. Bear that in mind, and when we have saved my old friend I shall look for my reward."

"You promised not to hurry me. Give me time, and please quit making love to me, especially at unsuitable times. You ought to be thinking of Mrs. Tardy's precarious condition,

not of your own selfish wishes. I am disappointed in you, Mr. Kirke."

"Are you? Well, it will teach you not to expect anything superhuman of me. I am only a man, and I am in love with you, not with Mrs. Tardy. Highly as I estimate her, and anxious as I am for her recovery, I believe I could find it in my heart to be thankful for the chance that brought us to work together for her salvation. But for that, I might, with my awkward ways with women, have been a long, long time getting as near as I flatter myself I am now. Just give me some assurance, Constance, that I am not deceiving myself with a false hope."

"You would return thanks for small favours, then," said Constance, crisply; "and if you think that I am playing the part of coquette towards you, I recall the promise I gave you last night. I won't try to dwell on your goodness, your—your—best qualities, in place of your worst; though I was beginning to make you out quite a—a—"

Her voice faltered and broke down.

"A—what, Constance? Don't say a hero, for that would be too absurd to say of a plain man like me. What was it you were beginning to make of me? After saying so much, you must say more."

He grasped her hand so firmly that she could have cried out, but something in that touch constrained her to say:

"A man to live or die for, if you will have it."

The tone was defiant, but the words had scarcely passed her lips when she was lifted from her feet, strained to his breast with all the might of the strong passion that glowed within him, and kisses were pressed on cheek, brow and lips, thus sealing the compact he was resolved should not henceforth be broken.

"Thus I claim my own," he said, in a voice broken by emotion. "I will doubt you no more, Constance, and this is the last time I will attempt to caress you till the day comes on which you pledge yourself to become mine for ever. Take your own time; be as exacting as you please, and I will bear with it all, in consideration of this moment of supreme happiness."

He released her, and she stood alternately pale as death and flushing with shame at the result of the words she had recklessly spoken. She presently faltered:

"I spoke more than I felt. I—I do not love you yet, Mr. Kirke—I may never love you as such a man as you deserves, but if you really care for me so much I—I will do my best. But, oh! have patience with me! Don't hurry me into a new life for which I am not yet prepared. I once thought I would never marry—that I would live for my art; but—but your earnestness, your masterly way of love-making, have shown me there is something better worth living for—to make a happy future for a good man."

"That is the right conclusion, Constance," he said, with a radiant face. "Far be it from me, my dear girl, to hurry you into a union you might repent if you had not time to come to me of your own free will. I have granted you that; I give you three months to weigh me in the balance, but I shall carry with me the belief that at the end of that time I shall not be found wanting."

"I think not—I believe not," she frankly replied, at the same time extending her hand.

He took it, drew from his pocket a massive gold ring and slipping it on her finger, said:

"Wear this, I entreat, as the symbol of the endless love I bear you. I have admired other women, but you alone have I loved. You have seemed to belong to me since that first day I met you and brought you here; that meeting was decreed by fate, I firmly believe, and the union to spring from it will be blessed by heaven."

"But you must not take too much for granted," she said, in a fluttered tone; "I have not engaged myself to marry you—only to try to love you well enough for that; so it will hardly be right for me to wear your ring."

"The ring shall not bind you more than the words you have spoken this morning, so you



may safely wear it. Grant me this favour; it is but a small one to ask from the woman who, I feel assured, will yet become my wife, with her own full and free consent."

Constance bowed her head, allowed the ring to retain its place, and softly said:

"You may have your own way in this, and you may feel assured that if I do become your wife, it will be with the conviction in my own mind that I prefer you to every other living creature!"

"And I, for my own part, know now that I would not exchange you for any other living creature. I declare I feel as if I have been intoxicating myself on something more exhilarating than Mrs. Tardy's wine."

"And that speech brings me back to the common affairs of life. Go away, please, and let me prepare luncheon. Tom will soon be back from his errand, and he must not find you here."

"Well, I am going, and Tom is coming; I see him crossing the yard."

"When the boy came in Kirke had vanished, and he delivered the message he brought, wondering what had put Miss Constance in such a flutter."

Calm and self-contained as she usually was, the scene through which she had passed—the promise she had given, it seemed to her almost without any volition of her own—agitated her deeply.

She soon left Tom to complete his duties in the dining-room alone, and ran up to her own apartment to try and compose herself sufficiently to appear at luncheon.

"What had she done?" she asked herself in the severest spirit of self-accusation. "Had she not pledged herself to learn to love a man for whom she, at present, had no other feeling than respect and gratitude? He was too good to be trifled with, and yet she might not be able, after all, to overcome her distaste to his odd ways and lack of personal attractions."

Then came the reaction, and she admitted to herself that his eccentricities had a charm for her; that his strongly marked features were, at times, almost handsome from the fine expression that lighted them up, and she finally ended, by saying aloud:

"I was silly to say it to him, but he is a man for whom a good woman might be able to live or die. He is true as steel, and I will abide by what I said."

Having come to this decision, she made some changes in her dress, and with her usual quietness of manner went to Mrs. Tardy's room to inquire if she would go to luncheon, or have it served in her own apartment.

She found the old lady dressed and ready to go out, though she was looking feeble, and seemed scarcely able to be out of her bed.

With a faint smile, she said:

"Agnes wanted me to rest to-day, but I cannot bear to be laid up like a worthless old hulk. I think I shall soon be better, as Dr. Morton says he understands my condition, and with his help a strong woman like me ought to get over this trouble very soon."

"And you will, dear friend," said Constance, tenderly kissing her. "I predict that henceforth your health will steadily improve. Do you know what has occurred to Mr. Kirke? He thought that possibly the wine Mr. Brenton sent you was not as pure as he thought, and he has been to London and brought you a keg to use in place of it."

"He is very good," said Mrs. Tardy, in a thoughtful tone. "I had decided not to drink any more of Mr. Brenton's wine, Constance. I have grown steadily worse since I have done so, and it cannot agree with me. My dear, I wish you would frankly tell me what you detected in it that caused you to drop the glass last evening? You grew so pale I thought you would faint, and there must have been a reason for such unusual emotion."

"I was only frightened at breaking that beautiful little glass," replied Constance, evasively. "You were good enough to forgive me, but I find it difficult to forgive myself for such awkwardness."

Mrs. Tardy gave her a penetrating glance, sighed softly, and then arose and said:

"Help me to the dining-room, Constance. I wish to be seated at the table before the others arrive. Proff thinks I ought not to leave my room all day, but I shall be a great deal nearer death than at present when I consent to be shut up in four walls and make no effort to get beyond them."

Constance silently offered the support of her arm, and together they crossed the hall towards the other side of the house.

Workmen had been busy all the morning removing the condemned paper from the walls of her chamber, and a bonfire had been made of it in the back yard.

She glanced into the room, shivered slightly, and hurried on without passing a comment on what had been done.

After luncheon Manvers was going back to town, leaving Agnes behind him.

His brief holiday was over, and he was ready to assume his full responsibility as one of the heads of the firm, and take from Markley the power placed in his hands by his partner, for what end he was far from suspecting.

When the bell rang, and the family gathered around the board, the old lady was congratulated on the effort she had made to appear among them, though the professor shook his head gravely over her imprudence.

When the waiter offered her the decanter of wine she gently repulsed it and said:

"I shall drink no more of that, Tom. Bring me some from Mr. Kirke's keg. I am going to pledge him in his present, as the best way of returning my thanks for his thoughtfulness."

"The wine has been changed—I took care of that," said Constance, thrown off her guard for the moment.

Mrs. Tardy gave her another expressive glance, and with a faint sigh said:

"Thank you, my dear, it was very considerate of you to attend to that."

She tasted the new wine, and after sipping half a glass, cheerfully said:

"This is the true vintage—there was a slight metallic taste in the other which greatly annoyed me from the first, and if Emma had not expressly stated that it was perfectly pure I should have thought it had been tampered with."

"Very likely it was before it passed into Brenton's hands," said the professor, with the simple faith that was in him, for no suspicion of foul play had entered his mind. "I was reading an article the other day on the manufacture of wine, and it was really frightful to discover what impositions are put off on the people."

The conversation then dropped.

(To be Continued.)

## SCOTCH LAW.

A SCOTCH gentleman, long resident in England, while living at an inn in Edinburgh, was startled by a fine-looking Scot calling upon him and claiming him as his father. Having a fair supply of sons, he denied his claim to the honour of being the stranger's parent, but was then shown a contract of marriage between himself and the young man's mother some years before he left Scotland. The young man was told it was a boyish bargain, and so on, but for "auld lang syne" he was asked to be the guest of his mother's old lover.

The stranger fell in love with the gentleman's daughter, and by the week's end asked her in marriage, saying if he was refused he would conclude it was because she was his half-sister. In vain the father protested and the daughter refused. The stranger lover threatened a scene, which meant exposing the wife and family to an imputation which would shock them of course.

At last the father told his daughter how he was in her lover's power, and she consented to have him in three years, and signed a Scotch agreement to that effect, only in the present tense. He then gave up his mother's document and departed, after a scene which need not be

further named. Several years have passed, and his death in New York has been announced in the newspapers, but, now that the young lady wishes to marry, no proof of the death can be found, and the lawyers warn her against another Enoch Arden case.

Advertisements are now appearing in the New York papers offering a reward for a certificate of his death.

## WHO DID IT?

OR,

## THE WARD'S SECRET.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

"AND so, Miss Devaux, you have been accustomed to very different countries and habits to Great Britain, or even this bright land," said Count Antoine, as he turned from a first-class picture that he had been showing to the intellectual and quick appreciation of Viola Devaux.

The girl looked at him with an inquiring smile.

"Why should you think so, count," she said. "I do not remember giving you any reason to consider me less naturalised than Pauline."

"Oh, for many reasons," he replied. "You have not the peculiarities of a true born native. Tell me, did you like your first home as well as England or Italy?"

"I had less trouble there," she said. "So there were happier days."

"But less exciting ones, perhaps," he returned.

Viola hesitated.

"Must there be excitement to be happiness?" she asked.

"There must be excitement in love," he said, "and that I presume to be the chief happiness and excitement of a girl's life."

Viola did not reply. Her cheeks did not even flush.

Her experience of love had been too sad for her to feel the ordinary flutter that would have dyed the delicate skin in ordinary cases.

The count watched her narrowly.

"Do you mean that you have never even known such an excitement?" he said. "I am certain of the contrary."

Once more her large eyes expressed the wonder she felt.

"I see that you think me an impertinent old fellow," he said, "but as I am old enough to be your father it is nothing to make you so indignant."

She looked more unflinchingly at him.

"I am not angry," she said. "I do not think you wish to vex me, but it is strange that you should hint at so many events in my past life, unless you know more about it than I believe."

"If I did I should be no conjuror," he said. "A man that knocks about the world as I have done may well pick up bits of news about even a stranger. And besides, like most soothsayers, all I have told you might apply to almost any girl I could meet with."

Viola laughed in spite of herself.

"Scarcely," she said. "It is not every girl who has seen to so many countries as I have."

"I might know that from your style and manner," he returned, quietly, "but I do not tell you so."

"Then I am right—you did know something of my history," she said.

"Would you trust me if I said that I did. Would it be any comfort to you?" he asked, in a lower tone.

"Perhaps," she said. "No, I think not."

"Then you do not care, for you do not trust me," he said.

And there was a tone of sadness in his words that touched her to the very quick.

"You are wrong," she said. "I do feel more inclined to trust you than I would almost anyone else I have known so little, but it is impossible."

"Scarcely," he said. "I tell you that I know a great deal about you. I have heard from others enough to guide me as to the rest." "Indeed. What, from Mr. Leclerc?" she asked, quickly.

"No."

"From my maid?" she exclaimed, suspiciously. "Surely she would not dare—"

"No, certainly not. I would not stoop so low," he returned, sharply. "I would not gather half digested news from servants. Why should not the public prints have told me, they are not patent even to foreigners?"

She did not colour now.

She remembered how much there was sad, ay, and disrespectful in the sad tale. And if this count believed it how could he think that she was worthy of respect and honour?

She had played a part that could be easily misinterpreted by imperfect reports and by the actual facts as given to the world.

"It is a tale I do not wish to speak of," she said. "If you do know it you must be aware that it is most painful."

"Yes," he said; "and one that had best be forgotten. Death and murder are no fitting subjects for a girl like you. It must be buried in the past. Better that you should dwell on the future and find another lover; and a happier fate."

She shook her head.

"Never!" she said; "never!"

"You are rash in saying so. It is an impossibility that one so young should dwell on the past, and remember a deceased lover for ever."

"I am not sure that he is dead," she answered; "and even if he were I should not change."

"That you can't pretend to say; Pauline Leclerc would accept an eligible suitor to-morrow," he said, sarcastically.

"You have no ground to say so," she said, warmly. "It is unjust to make such accusations against one you know so little."

"Pardon me, Miss Devaux, I speak with perfect knowledge of the truth," he said. "I can safely assert that, if I chose, both Miss Leclerc and her father would accept me, ay, me, at my age, for her husband. And her lover has not been dead longer, at least, not many weeks longer, than yours."

Viola looked uneasily around.

She had been accidentally separated from the rest of a small circle invited to Mr. Leclerc's rooms, and in the room where they were standing one or two pictures of some rarity had been the excuse for his detaining her.

But how could she tell that no one was overhearing their dialogue, when it turned on such subjects.

"I had rather hear no more," she said.

"Nor would I have said this much," was the rejoinder, "only that it is necessary there should be confidence between us. Viola, I am old enough for your father; I have seen much of the world—ay, and suffered much in my time. I have money, now, and position, and some power. If you want help will you apply to me."

She could not misunderstand the earnest and grave manner.

"Yes, I will," she said, simply; "but I do not think that it is likely. I am obliged to remain under Mr. Leclerc's care."

"Indeed; by your father's will?"

"Yes."

"And leave your fortune at his command? Has he power over that also?"

Viola gave a half bitter smile.

"I have none," she said, "or very little."

"Indeed; how was your father so improvident or unfortunate?" he asked, with a sort of scorn, as she fancied.

"I know nothing of it," she said, except that he was good and kind; whatever he did must have been the best, I am sure," she added, indignantly.

The count smiled provokingly.

"Ah, so it is where the heart speaks in young and untrained minds," he said. "As if there was ever misfortune without fault. But it is well to have a child so trusting and blind."

"Alas, he knows it not; he never knew," she said, sadly.

"Were you not with him, then, in your childhood?"

"I was sent away before I learnt how to love and value him," she said. "I know not what it would have been to have a parent."

"Would it make up for a lover?—I mean for him you have lost," he asked.

"It would console me; it would be the only comfort I could have now," she said; "but that is impossible, and it is something useless to think of it; it only weakens one."

"Perhaps it may be so, but it would be a pleasure to your father could he know such were your feelings," replied the count. "Well, if I should take it in my head to marry Pauline you could perhaps come and live with her, and defy Mr. Leclerc and his rights," he added, with a cynical smile, and with a laugh that had some sadness in it he turned away, and opening the door left the little assembly.

It was only one of those early and easy receptions that are now being imitated in our fashionable world, but which at that time were only known as a continental custom.

The visitors were gradually dispersing when the count left, but the last had not taken his departure when an individual of a very peculiar type entered the saloon, evidently searching for the host, who at the moment was about escorting a guest to the portals.

Viola would perhaps not have remarked his peculiarities had she not seen looks of some surprise and uneasiness exchanged between the Italians still present at his entrance.

But once observed, she felt it an impossibility to remove her gaze from his features and his movements.

He was decidedly foreign, but of what country it would have been difficult to decide.

His dress was in a sort of semi-fashionable style that did not give the air of good birth or breeding to his appearance.

But yet his was a face that bore no common expression of talent and keenness, and what was more indescribable, of a certain power that was spell like in its nature, but yet made itself felt without knowing in what it consisted.

Viola was standing near a settee, on which two gentlemen were sitting, their backs were turned towards her, and they were unconscious of her presence.

But she distinctly heard the words that being in the Italian tongue made the speakers less fearful of being overheard by their English hosts.

"Do you know him—that is strange," asked one of these visitors.

"No, he is remarkable enough to be remembered," returned the other.

"It is Drovski—the famous detective. That man would gain admission into a palace if it suited him," was the reply.

"Indeed, and what can bring him here?"

"Can't say, it's peculiar. And these are strangers, of course, and English. He seemed to be looking for the English signor, for some cause or other. And he's a regular stormy petrel in my opinion. There's mischief where he appears."

The gentlemen both rose, perhaps with an idea of escaping from the prophesied risk, and as they did so Viola's figure caught their view.

They shrugged their shoulders in some embarrassment at the discovery of her near neighbourhood, but the belief in the comparative mystery in which their language would wrap their meaning re-assured them as to her having overheard the remarks.

But she had understood every syllable. Her foreign education had made both Italian and French as familiar to her as her own tongue, and the effect had been proportionately alarming.

What did this man's presence portend? Was it danger to—she dared not even to form the name in her heart.

Or could it be that she was right, and that some fresh information had reached her native land as to the murder and the fate of Neville Grantley.

She half concealed herself lest her attention should be distracted from the formidable stranger.

She watched his every look and word and gesture with breathless anxiety.

And she saw, or fancied she saw, that he was perfectly aware of her observation. Then the door opened.

Mr. Leclerc entered and at once became aware of the addition to his guests.

He approached Drovski (if such was his name) with an inquiring cold surprise.

Viola could not catch the words, but she perfectly guessed their meaning.

She saw her guardian's suppressed start and look of anxiety in his eyes.

But the quiet mien of the detective was not in the least disturbed.

Had he been merely discharging an invitation to dinner, or the last opera, there could not have been more perfect sang-froid in his whole aspect and air.

But still he gained his point.

Mr. Leclerc made some hurried evasion of the request—whatever it was—in vain. A brief word and then it seemed settled.

There were one or two still remaining to take leave.

Pauline was brightly jesting with a cavalier who was paying his devoirs in broken English, and one lady was wrapping herself in her cloak.

But in another moment they were gone, and Mr. Leclerc escorted the stranger from the room.

Pauline, perhaps, did not observe his entrance or exit thus accompanied.

If she did it would not have seemed to her more than a common courtesy on her father's part to a guest.

But Viola knew better.

She felt sure that Drovski was closetted in her guardian's private room.

And she had also a terrible fear as to the subject of that conference.

She had only a doubt as to the actual results discussed in it.

But for the rest, for the real meaning of the detective's visit and to what it related, she could not hesitate in her fears and belief.

It were simple folly to think that a man of such renown in his calling would have appeared for less cause than an actual crime.

And if so, who was supposed to be the criminal?

Was it her guardian or her lover?

Pauline was happily unconscious of the terror that hung over her.

Her spirits were actually reviving as the variety of all around served to divert her stunned brain.

It was not but that she had loved Reginald truly and warmly. But her nature had not the depth of Viola's.

She could forget, while the right heiress of The Wilderness was like the granite rock of her own fair country—malleable to the impression and firm in its retention.

"Viola, is it not amusing how that dear, charming old count tries to please me," she said, with a wave of her outstretched hand. "It does make me laugh sometimes, and I really do like him prodigiously."

"Pauline, how can you talk so foolishly?"

"Ah, my dear solemn Viola, how can you be so utterly old world in your ideas? One would think you had lived in the ark," returned Pauline, gaily.

"Why? Because I do not think you ought to trifle with a man old enough for your father," returned the girl.

"I have no such intention."

"You cannot mean that you are serious?"

"In what?"

"In the idea of marrying him."

Pauline did blush slightly.

"My dear Viola, what nonsense. Why should I not?" she said.

"If you can love him, but that I cannot believe," returned the young ward, shaking her head.

"Do you find him so disagreeable?"



"No, but you are so different in all," replied the girl.

"In age, you mean."

"In everything, especially when compared with him you loved," returned Viola, firmly.

She was emboldened by the sure knowledge she possessed that the count had little or no idea of any such project.

And it was simply exasperating for her to think that one of her own sex, young and attractive, should be so easily deceived.

Pauline looked at her fixedly.

"Really, Viola, I do think you are jealous," she said.

"I cannot believe that you are serious in such nonsense," returned Viola.

"Why not?" asked the girl, eagerly. "Can you not see that after such a sorrow as mine that I would rather prefer one as unlike to my poor Reginald as the Count Serrano? I do not want—I do not believe that I could love again as I did him, but if it is my father's wish, and I can secure so good an establishment, why should I resist it?"

"Does he—does Mr. Leclerc wish it?" asked Viola, quickly.

"Yes, why should he not?"

The girl could have replied:

"Why should he?" but she restrained the impulse.

"Dear Pauline, you can scarcely imagine what I mean. You who are so young and lovely to be sent to be the bride of a man double your age! It is so strange. I cannot understand it," she went on, in anxious thought, that might have aroused the suspicions of her friend had it been possible to awaken more serious and hidden fears and reflections in Pauline.

"My dear Viola, do not trouble yourself about the reason of papa's arrangements. It is enough for me that he has made them. And when I am the Countess di Serrano I will give you every chance of catching another count for yourself. Viola well nigh started.

It was so completely what the count himself had said.

She should live with them if he married Pauline.

It was a strange coincidence.

And Viola dropped the useless discussion and quickly retired to her room.

What was to be the end?

Mystery and guilt would perhaps triumph over innocence and rectitude.

And she was powerless to prevent the wrong. Oh, that oath!—that fearful, clogging oath!

Was it ever to haunt her till her last hour?

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was as Viola had expected.

Drovski, the detective, described, as he had justly been by the Italians, as one of the most acute men of his time, was sitting in close and serious conclave with Mr. Leclerc.

It was difficult to read the inscrutable features of the man, or to decide as to his real meaning.

But still, whatever he might believe, there was no doubt that he had still perplexing doubts, and that he was still weighing all that he saw or heard with carefully balanced attention.

"I have told you, Mr. Leclerc, that it is by Sir Philip Waldegrave's express desire that I have undertaken the case, even now that it seems a hopeless mystery. And he is fully prepared to spend any amount of money in the investigation. Indeed, wealth is of little value to a man who is a widower and childless," he added, sentimentally.

"A very intelligible proposition," returned Mr. Leclerc, with bland composure.

"And money can accomplish most things," resumed the detective.

"True, except bring the dead to life," said Mr. Leclerc, coolly.

"Precisely, but in this case we simply wish to make out a full and sufficient case against the dead, if he is really out of the reach of justice, or should he be living, to be prepared to establish it on his discovery. You can comprehend this, Mr. Leclerc?"

"Certainly."

"Now the fact is, that I, personally, am by no means satisfied," he went on.

"You do not think Neville Grantley is dead?" asked Mr. Leclerc.

"No, nor that he is guilty," put in the detective, calmly.

Mr. Leclerc tried very hard to look and speak as an ordinary individual might on the occasion. But do what he would his surprise wore very much the appearance of alarm as he replied:

"It is rather a paradox, Mr. Drovski. To my unpracticed mind it did seem remarkably clear."

"It does not to mine. I never like circumstantial evidence, Mr. Leclerc. There may be plots and plans that assume the colouring of truth and malign the dead; but at present I cannot pretend to give an opinion. I am here to obtain evidence with a calm, unprejudiced mind. To me the criminal is a criminal, whether he be king or kaiser," he went on, cynically.

"And may I ask what brings you to me just now?" asked Mr. Leclerc.

"Nothing more natural. It was at your house and on the provocation of your ward, so far as I understand," replied the detective.

"And so you wish to re-open the subject, and send back my poor daughter into the wretched state from which she is just recovering."

"By no means. I only wish to ask you a few questions, and probably to have a brief interview with Miss Devaux," replied Drovski. And what is most to the purpose, I should like to hear from you, in the first place, whether you, Mr. Paul Leclerc, can, as a man of honour and probity, declare that you do believe Mr. Neville Grantley to be the murderer of Mr. Reginald Waldegrave. If you have any doubts it were as well to state them. Life is at stake. It should not be trifled with lest the murder falls on the head of the slanderer as much as the criminal, you see, my good sir?"

Mr. Leclerc flushed—perhaps from anger—at the tutelage from one beneath him in rank and education.

"You are of course accustomed to this sort of bullying language, Mr. Drovski," he said, "but a man at my time of life and in my position scarcely needs to be educated in first principles of right. I have seen no cause for altering my opinion as to Mr. Grantley's guilt since the beginning of the affair."

"Nor as to his death, Mr. Leclerc?"

"That I have no possible means of judging," he answered, impatiently.

"That I can well believe," said Drovski, with some significance of manner. "However that I shall take other means of settling. In the meantime I shall trace out a clue that has been given me as to his existence. It may be utterly unfounded. Still in my opinion the young fellow is not at all condemned by that evidence—that could be swept away like a web."

"That is for you to say," answered Paul Leclerc, hoarsely.

"True, I forget all you unprofessionals do not see these matters as I do. I shall talk to Miss Devaux, and then see one or two others on the matter. Of course it cannot be of much interest to you, Mr. Leclerc."

"Pardon me, it is of vital importance since it was at my house the murder was committed. I wish it to be cleared up indisputably."

"Then your desire will be gratified, I hope. I shall not rest till it is sifted to the bottom. I have reason to think that one or two who were never examined had something to do with the knowledge of the truth, and I think I can get hold of them."

Paul Leclerc bowed assentingly. He did not speak.

How could he when a gulf was opening before him that he had believed to be closed for ever? Neville's death and Viola's oath were all that he believed needful for his safety.

What was this miserable phantom to be raised once more to haunt his dreams? What should he do to lay its restless spirit?

He must gain time, that was everything—time for what he desired to accomplish ere any crisis should take place.

Time for his own safeguard, and, if it were

needful, escape. He rose calmly from his chair.

"Then I can do nothing more for you, Mr. Drovski. You shall see Miss Devaux in the morning, though I am sure she can have nothing to add to her evidence, and it is a very painful subject for her, as you may suppose. As to the rest it is not for me to attempt to rival you in your own profession; you of course need no possible help from me," he added, with a slight but perceptible sneer.

Drovski followed the signal and rose also from his seat.

"No, Mr. Leclerc, except what you are as unable as unwilling to give me," he replied. "I should be a sad tyro if I could not spell my way except where the letters are written in copper-plate. I have heard and seen enough for my purpose, and I wish you good-day."

There was surely nothing more to be desired, and yet Paul Leclerc retired to his room that night with small chance of a refreshing repose. Was he never to be at rest?

At any rate he would secure Pauline's future, and then—and then must come the sore and bitter end at its pleasure.

Could anything have redeemed the character of that unhappy man from utter contempt it was his devotion to his child.

Yet that child was unconscious of the curse that she had involuntarily brought upon him by his very love and care, and it might be ill repaid, what in truth was the work of a foe rather than a friend.

Blind and ill at ease Paul Leclerc's one less and unselfish quality was exaggerated to his darkest and deepest crime.

(To be Continued)

## EYESIGHT.

MILTON's blindness was the result of overwork and dyspepsia.

One of the most eminent American divines having for some time been compelled to forego the pleasure of reading, has spent hundreds of pounds in value, and lost years of time, in consequence of getting up several hours before day and studying by artificial light. His eyes never got well.

Multitudes of men and women have made their eyes weak for life by the too free use of the eyesight, reading small print, and doing fine sewing.

In view of these things, it is well to observe the following rules in the use of the eyes:

Avoid all sudden changes between light and darkness.

Never begin to read, or write, or sew for several minutes after coming from darkness to a bright light.

Never read by twilight, or moonlight, or of a very cloudy day.

Never sew or read directly in front of a light, or window or door.

It is best to have the light fall from above, obliquely over the left shoulder.

Never sleep so that, on the first waking, the eyes shall open on the light of a window.

Do not use the eyesight by light so scant that it requires an effort to discriminate.

Too much light creates a glare, and pains and confuses the sight.

The moment you are sensible of an effort to distinguish that moment cease, and take a walk or ride.

As the sky is blue and the earth green, it would seem that the ceiling should be a bluish tinge, and the carpet green, and the walls of some mellow tint.

The moment you are prompted to rub the eyes that moment cease using them.

ENCKE's well-known periodical comet will be in perihelion again about the end of July, and a small comet, discovered by Herr Tempel in 1873, and which appeared to move in an elliptic orbit with a period of about five years, will be due about the same time.

## USE NOT HASTY WORDS.

How many persons have been ruined by a very few words, uttered in haste and without thought. A moment's reflection showed them their folly, and brought repentance; but it was too late. Engagements made without reflection often bring the keenest remorse; and declarations in a moment of excitement are the occasion of many bitter tears.

Heaven made men thinking beings, and they should never speak till they have thought what is best to be said. Those who are in the habit of making hasty and positive assertions, as many are, should not pride themselves much on their decision of character, for if they do they will not be likely to recall their words, however fatal the consequences may be to themselves or others. And such persons are always in trouble.

Solomon has well said: "Seest thou a man hasty in spirit; there is more hope of a fool than of him." Men who are inclined to speak without due thought should never have false pride of opinion. They should be always ready to acknowledge the errors which calm reflection shows them they have committed. To persevere in an error is worse than the first commission of it.

Fools may be unwilling to take back their words, but wise men will always take a pleasure in correcting their faults, and in apologising for any injury to others which their words have caused. All men are liable to err, but few have humility enough to acknowledge it.

## MARRIED LIFE.

THE following beautiful and true sentiments are from the pen of that charming writer, Fredrika Bremer, whose observations might well become the rules of life, so appropriate are they to many of its phases:

Deceive not one another in small things, nor in great. One little single falsehood has, before now, disturbed a whole married life. A small cause has often great consequences.

Fold not your arms together and sit idle. "Laziness is Satan's cushion." Do not run much from your home. One's own health is of more worth than gold.

Many a marriage, my friend, begins like the rosy morning, and then falls away like the snow-wreath. And why? Because the married pair neglect to be as well pleased with each other after marriage as before.

Endeavour always, my friend, to please one another, but at the same time keep Him in your thoughts. Lavish not all your love on to-day, for remember that marriage has its to-morrows, and its day after to-morrow, too. "Spare, as we may say, fuel for the winter."

Consider, my daughter, what the word wife expresses. The married woman is the husband's domestic faith; in her hand he must be able to confide home and family—be able to entrust her with the key of his heart as well as the key of his eating-room.

His honour and his home are under her keeping—his well-being is in her hands. Think of this! And, ye sons, be faithful husbands and good fathers of families. Act so that your wives shall esteem and love you.

## LONGEVITY.

LONGEVITY in France is increasing every day—all authentic, of course. Here are a few facts. In the month of May, 1877, a woman named Virginie Deviesy, who resided at No 16, Rue de Longchamps, Paris, died at the age of 103, she having been born in 1769. For the last ten years of her life she was in a state of infancy, and, during the last two, she had not uttered a single word.

In July of the same year, a man named Pierre Turpin, who resided at 97, Avenue d'Eylau, died at the age of 104. For the last six years of his

life he was in a state of childhood, and spent his time in cutting up corks and putting them up in a sack. I could relate a great many more cases of centenarians, but the list would be too long for an ordinary letter.

If centenarians are rare, octogenarians are much less so, and the latter are met with almost daily in the common walks of life; but what has never been seen or heard of before (excepting perhaps the case of Thomas Parr) is the marriage of two centenarians.

Only three or four months ago a gentleman named De Brogues, residing at 20, Rue d'Orleans, Paris, married a Madame Massat, widow. The bridegroom was aged 101 and the bride 99, thus making up two centuries between them.

Here is another remarkable case of human longevity. On October 21st last a gentleman named Duroy, a retired officer, aged 104, attended the wedding of two great-grand-daughters. He led them both to the altar, followed by the bridegrooms, his own children, grandchildren, and great-grand-children; and to see the old gentleman no one would have imagined he was a centenarian; his gait was steady, and he was as straight as a post. At the wedding dinner in the evening he sang at dessert a song composed for the occasion. This was followed by a ball, which he opened in person, dancing with astonishing agility for his age.—H. C.

## POOR LOO.

By the Author of "Dan's Treasure," "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," etc.

## CHAPTER LVI.

## LIKE A TWO-EDGED SWORD.

For true repentance never comes too late;  
As soon as born she makes herself a shroud  
The weeping mantle of a fleecy cloud,  
And swift as thought her airy journey takes;  
Her hand Heaven's azure gate with trembling strikes.  
The stars do with amazement on her look;  
She tells her story, in so sad a tone  
That angels start from bliss and give a groan.  
LEN.

"AND you are really going to leave us, Miss Dorset?" said Mrs. Talboys, with polite regret. "I hope we shall meet again; we return to England ourselves in the course of another month or two."

"It is not probable," replied Constance, curtly. "My present destination is Bruges; good-bye."

Adieus were likewise said to Major Talboys and his son, and then she left them.

"Ought I to have offered to see her off?" asked young Talboys of his mother, reluctantly. "No, you would only be in the way. General Speke is dancing attendance on her," was the reply.

At which the young man breathed freely while his father, less reticent in the expression of his opinion, said:

"Tam glad she is gone. I never liked the woman. I think she is a little mad, and you must have been a trifle touched, my dear, to have made so much fuss with such a bad tempered, ill-bred person."

This was too much for Mrs. Talboys, who at once began to defend her absent acquaintance, at which occupation we will leave her to follow the subject of their contention to the railway station.

"Miss Dorset, you have not given me an answer to the proposal I made to you a few days ago. Will you permit me to write to your father and ask his consent? You would not allow me to speak to your brother."

"No, certainly not," was the decided reply, for the mention of her father's name had stung her back to the realities of life; "it will be useless," she added, in a milder tone; "I shall never marry—never. You will perhaps one day know the reason; let us talk no more about it."

The general bowed his head; he had been led to anticipate a different reply, and he was piqued and irritated by the manner in which he had been treated, but he was too perfect a gentleman to resent it except by the coolness of his manner, and he took her ticket for Bruges; saw that her luggage was weighed and registered and at last handed her into the train, and lifted his hat as it moved out of the station, for in her self absorption she forgot to offer him even her hand at parting.

More vexed—with pride rather than wounded affection—he turned away and came face to face with a military man just arrived from England with whom at one time he had been on intimate terms, and who now, after shaking hands, accosted him with the query:

"Wherever did you pick up Constance Dorset?"

"Pick her up," with dignity. "You seem to be using a lady's name very freely."

At which the other laughed, not in a pleasant tone either as he said:

"Well, it has been bandied about pretty freely, and will be again if I am not mistaken. You were in India at the time, but you must have heard of the Grove House Murder—a child taken out of his bed in the middle of the night and cut to pieces or something like it; the step-sister has always been suspected of the crime; you have just parted with her."

"Impossible!" gasped the general, turning very pale.

"Fact, I assure you. I know her face too well not to recognise it again; those bird of prey eyes don't gleam, thank heaven, out of every woman's face; besides I was interested in the case at the time and went to see and hear her examined; she had a near squeak for it; a distant connection of mine married the Dorsets' governess, who had been also suspected, and from them I heard that the girl had confessed to the crime, and had been banished from England by her father on penalty of being delivered up to justice. How much of this is positively correct of course I don't presume to say."

But General Speke was silent:

"To think I should have asked that woman to be my wife," he thought. "She said I should one day perhaps know the reason why she refused me. Gad, I know it now."

To his companion, however, he merely said:

"You greatly surprise me, and I should like to think you are mistaken. I met her brother in India and we came across each other here, he only left yesterday."

"Yes; Herbert Dorset, of course; it's all plain enough; if you have any doubt you can easily solve it. By the way, do you happen to know the Talboys? I want to find them."

Thus it happened that Constance Dorset did not leave Spa one hour too soon, and Mrs. Talboys had a severe bilious attack brought on by sheer vexation at having been, as she termed it, "so duped."

She vowed she would never forgive Mabel, who must have known it. But then, Mrs. Talboys' vows were never very binding.

And Constance travelled on at the slow pace at which Continental railways seem to think speedy enough for the purposes of life, past towns and villages, hills and plains, and by nightfall she had reached Bruges.

She had no curiosity to walk about the town, she had been there before, but she had some time to wait before a train would start for Ostend, and that she employed by eating some dinner; she had long ago ceased to allow any mental anxiety to interfere with her digestion, for had she not got over this weakness she would soon have been reduced to a mere skeleton.

In the train once more, on to Ostend, which she reaches just in time to catch the night boat for Dover, and now, after so many years, she is again upon the sea, and her mind calms down so that she can realise the danger that threatens her, and can plan out the revenge which she is bent upon accomplishing.

"Only three days," she murmurs, "let me be free till then; after that they may do their worst."



Eight hours at sea; she has suffered from the voyage, and her plight is so pitiful that she might have had a little compassion upon herself and have rested and slept for a few hours, but she will not, she must reach Little Bampton this evening, then she may pause. Not till then, however, and as she is bent upon avoiding London, the journey there is tiresome from being across country, and more time is lost in waiting for trains and changing lines than if she had travelled six times the distance in a direct line and without interruption.

She reaches the little watering-place at last; though the sea is still half a mile off, it is but a few steps from the railway station to the river side from whence the steamers for the Channel Islands and French ports start, and she hears this, and thinks it will offer an easy method of escape if she wants one.

But the strain of intense purpose which has been upon her since she left Spa is relaxed. It is not so much weariness of the body, as the feeling that she has reached her destination, that one part of her purpose is accomplished, and now, she must remain quiet and bide her time.

So complete is this feeling, that putting up at the railway hotel, she orders a plain dinner, and having partaken of it, wraps a dark cloak around her and strolls out for a walk.

She does not know the place, but in the moonlight it seems rather like a small rural town than a watering-place, for the sound of the sea does not reach her, it is too far off; a large church shows its steeple in the distance, and close by where she pauses a large dissenting chapel with a handsome manse and lawn before it stands calm and peaceful.

But she only glances at these; a stream of people, not very numerous, but coming in twos and threes, enters an unpretentious building to her right, which except that it is brilliantly lighted and the door thrown wide open, would seem to offer no inducement for anyone to enter it.

Why, Constance could not tell you had she been questioned at the moment, but after her mad haste to reach this place, she joined the people and walked with them into the chapel.

No one noticed her. A seaport and watering-place, where steamers with passengers came to and fro daily, was sure always to have a number of strangers in it, and Constance sat down in a corner, to think rather than to listen, to plan out further wickedness rather than to repent of the past.

The interior of the building was not inviting.

Bare, white-washed walls, low, though straight backed pews, which showed that the carpenter who made them, and the architect who designed the building, had a severe and mathematical mental construction and adhered rigidly to the right angle, scorning to admit a curve in any of his work.

The consequence was that pews, pulpit, galleries, walls and ceiling were all made upon the undeviating perpendicular and horizontal lines, a fact which Constance, accustomed to the gorgeous churches on the Continent, noted with a shiver.

Still, a power against which she could not rebel, held her here, until a man of middle age, with a face in which intellectual power, of the rugged, not polished stamp, was particularly marked, mounted the pulpit stairs, prayed, read a chapter, and gave out a hymn.

Constance thought, with a grim smile, that her presence there was something like a mockery, and stories crowded up in her mind of persons on the eve of a great crime being turned back from it by a word in season. But this could not happen in her case.

One crime, the worst she could ever be guilty of, having been committed upon the unoffending and helpless, had been laid in the eternal reckoning to her account, her hands were red with innocent blood; to turn her back from her course now was impossible.

For all her reasoning she did not move; she would give the good angels, if there were such beings, an equal chance with the children of darkness to try to save and purge her soul. And

then the preacher's words came to her like a two-edged sword cutting through to her very heart.

"When the wicked man turneth away from the evil he has done, he shall save his soul alive!" read the minister, and again he repeated it, while the words burnt themselves into his sinful listener's heart and brain.

Very emphatically, with all the hard, stern eloquence with which men of his stamp and sect speak to the souls of men and women, stripping them of all the gloss which society and custom wrap like a rich garment around them, hiding the impurity beneath, this man, whose name she had never heard, spoke to his audience, but he might have addressed every word of his discourse to the conscious-stricken Constance.

"We had all sinned; some of us unto blood, and the crime of murder was on our souls, and our hands were crimsoned, yet, even for such there was hope, there was redemption, if the criminal turned away from the evil and sought it no more."

I am not going to repeat the fervid discourse, to tell you how the horrors of eternal torture and agony were denounced upon the unrepentant sinner; the words and manner of the preacher were thrilling and impassioned and a calm looker on might have thought him a man who had sinned and suffered and repented, all with more than human intensity, but the effect of his words upon Constance Dorset was such, that when it was over, she reeled out of the chapel like a drunken woman, went back to her hotel, and saying she should want nothing more for that night, staggered to her own room, locked herself in and for the first time since poor little Freddy's death, she prayed.

What agonies of repentance her soul went through that night who shall say; she never heard the storm that had arisen and that through the night raged with such fury, and when at length, exhausted mind and body sank beneath the strain and fatigue they had so long endured, she fell asleep still kneeling, and the morning dawned and found her in the same position.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### "BUT SHE DID SLEEP."

Three corpses lay out on the shining sand  
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,  
And the women were weeping and wringing their hands  
For those who would never come home to the town;  
For men must work and women must weep,  
And the sooner its over the sooner to sleep,  
And good-bye to the bar and its moaning.  
CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE chamber-maid looked in surprise at Constance Dorset's pale face as, after repeated knocks at the door, it was unlocked; and her astonishment still further increased when she saw that the bed had not been slept upon.

"Are you ill, miss?" she asked. "Has the storm kept you from sleeping? Can I get you anything?"

"Storm!" replied Constance, in a dazed tone; "has there been one?"

"Oh, yes, miss, and ever so many wrecks, and a young lady's been carried off and some says drowned, but how that may be I don't know. The master's been down to the beach, and he says as how he never seed such a sight in his life before."

"I must go and see it," said the lady, rousing herself from her stupor. Bring me a hot bath and some strong tea; a biscuit, nothing more."

And, the girl having left to obey her orders, she began to pace about the room restlessly.

"A lady carried off! Storms! wrecks!" she moaned. "Am I always to bring or follow in the wake of desolation?" and she wrung her hands.

All the wickedness of her past life stood out in glaring characters before her, and how should she turn back and not only sin no more, but undo some of the evil of which she had been guilty. Alas! some of it might be forgiven, it could never be blotted out and forgotten.

An hour later she stood on the sands, half sheltered by the bank of shingle, watching with something like a presage of coming horror, some large lumbering substances that the waves were rolling about, and that crowds of curious spectators were looking at and making feeble efforts to catch.

No need for any great exertion however, they all know what the waves are playing in such a ghastly fashion with, and the tide is going out; that ridge of daily submerged rocks will be a barrier against the return of the corpses to the sea, and they know they have but to bide their time to drag them ashore and recognise them.

It is part of the crew of that ill-fated yacht which an hour ago stranded upon the reef, and that now lies a wreck upon her side, torn and shaken by every breaker.

From the people standing around Constance learns of the tragic events of the morning, incomplete and exaggerated, but instinct rather than reason tells her that her brother Herbert had been the chief instigator in the abduction of the girl whom she is told is in the hotel yonder, dying if not dead.

She is afraid to ask many questions, but she stands here looking at the dark figures tossed about by the waves, and wondering which is the body of her brother, for she has been told that the man who had carried off the girl has been drowned with two of the seamen of the yacht, the rest having swam ashore and thus saved themselves.

At last! One of the bystanders plunges into the water waist deep and drags out something, which the people near crowd round to gaze upon.

Constance is one of them, but she steps back with a sigh of relief: it is the body of a seaman, and he is laid out upon the sands for a time and again attention is directed to the sea.

Another lifeless trophy and Constance breathes more freely; she may be mistaken after all; Herbert may now be calmly breakfasting with Lady Travers over yonder.

For she has ascertained the locality of the old lady's house, and intends making her way towards it.

She is turning away, thinking she will wait no longer, when a short cry makes her turn, and she sees a third body drawn on shore, but dressed not in the rough garb of a sea-faring man, but in clothes that might have been ordered for a gentleman.

With a cry she reaches the side of the dripping corpse.

Yes, there is no doubt about it.

Terribly battered by the jagged rocks, she yet recognises her brother's face, and if she could have entertained a doubt, his signet ring with their family crest upon it, catches her eye, and she knows that the last human being who entertained any genuine affection for herself was gone from her.

Yesterday she would have vowed vengeance and rebelled, however impotently. To-day she took it as part of her punishment, and not a tear rose to her eye, though her face was terribly set and pale as she said:

"This is my brother; take him up, some of you, and bring him to 91, South Crescent. I will pay you well for your pains."

So startling was the announcement, and so strange the face of the woman who made it, that the men about hesitated, and one of them ventured to ask if she was sure of the identity of the corpse.

"Quite sure," she replied, firmly; "look here," and she uncovered her own hand and showed a ring the counterpart of the one on the dead man's finger.

After that there was no question. Some of the pieces of wood washed in from the wreck by the help of some rope formed a stretcher, a shawl which Constance had carried on her arm was thrown over the corpse to hide its face from the glaring light of day, and so the cavalcade went on across the green, and Lady Travers, as from her windows she watched it approaching, wondered what it could mean, what it could be, and where it was going.



[AN AWAKENED CONSCIENCE.]

She had seen that Loo was safe, she had watched the wreck of the yacht, had through a glass witnessed some of the efforts made to save her and her crew, and her servants had come in with odd reports.

But as yet she had received no true account of the catastrophe, and she watches the gloomy procession as every step it comes nearer in simple curiosity.

Very keenly, too, she watches the tall, pale woman leading the way, but she fails to recognise her.

More than ten years have passed since those two last met, and each of those years has doubled itself in the havoc which the consciousness of crime has made, so that Lady Travers might well be excused in not suspecting that the woman looking nearly forty was, a dozen years ago, a girl with every promise of grace and beauty.

But the cavalcade stops at her door—is entering the house—her house. What can it mean?

She would rise to ring the bell but somehow her strength fails her, and she sits still listening eagerly, but powerless to move.

Her patience is not long tried, however.

A servant opens the door with the announcement:

"Miss Dorset, please, my lady."

Adding:

"And the poor young gentleman who was here last night is lying downstairs in the dining-room."

Then Lady Travers staggered to her feet.

"Constance!" she exclaimed, in incredulous surprise, "Why, you look like an old woman."

"Very possible," was the calm reply. "But Herbert lies downstairs looking as you and I shall look one day. Won't you come and see him?"

"No, I cannot look on the dead, it would kill me. He dined with me last night! Poor boy! poor boy! Order what you like—use my servants as though they were your own—but don't ask me to see him! Don't! I am not so strong as I was. Poor Herbert! poor Herbert!"

And the old woman broke down in very genuine tears. But Constance never wept.

Dry-eyed, with a grief to which tears would have seemed weak, she turned to the servant, told her to show the men what spare room to put the body in, gave her some money to pay them for their trouble, then sat down opposite the old woman, who was sobbing brokenly.

"How did it happen, aunt?" she asked, at length.

And the old woman, at the calm tone, looked up fearfully.

"I didn't suggest it," she said, eagerly anxious to defend herself. "He had made every arrangement before he came to me. I only told him where he would find Loo, but an hour after I saw her come back with Robert Marker. What happened I don't know."

Constance had winced when the surgeon's name was mentioned.

But she made no comment except to say:

"There must be an inquest, I am told. I arrived at the Railway Hotel last night. Shall I return there or come here. What do you wish me to do?"

"Come here by all means. I couldn't be left in the house alone, and send for your father. He is the proper person to arrange everything."

Again Constance winced.

But she had taken up her cross and must carry it, as nobler and purer souls than hers had done, to the end.

That night, the dead lying under the same roof, Constance Dorset sat in her room writing. At last she was doing an act of justice, making a written confession of her crime.

Her father would arrive in the morning, she would hand over her statement to him in the presence of witnesses, and declare herself ready to be given up into the hands of justice.

It takes a long time to write out the details of that foul crime, without which her confession would be incomplete.

But she finishes it at last, signs it, undresses, and for the first time for many nights past gets into bed and tries to sleep.

But she cannot. Horrible thoughts and fancies assail her.

She has, too, been suffering with neuralgia, the acuteness of which for hours past she has deadened by sheer mental intensity of purpose to finish the work she has begun.

Now the reaction has set in, and she is almost like a madwoman.

Anything for sleep and rest, and she bethinks herself of a narcotic which she has in her dressing case, and with unsteady hand she takes a large dose.

The hours go on, still she tosses about restlessly, she cannot sleep, and in the darkness she reaches the bottle that is on the table by the bedside, pours some of its contents into a glass and swallows it off.

She has no intention of taking more than sufficient to make her sleep painlessly, but her elbow resting on the sofa pillow slipped, and she had no consciousness of how much she had taken.

But she did sleep; so soundly that no earthly power shall wake her. Very calmly and peacefully, with a smile upon her face, as though some whispered words of forgiveness had reached her in that last moment, she lay, and the morning sunlight shining in through a broken lath of the Venetian blind fell upon her cold white face, giving it some of its lost youthful beauty.

Lady Travers coming into the room in her dressing-gown to ask her guest some question, spoke to her, but received no reply, then she went forward and touched her gently on the cheek.

But the deathly chill made the old woman's heart stand still; she, who had always feared and shunned the sight of death, now stood petrified and aghast at it; she could not move, her limbs were paralysed; and when some time after a servant found her and a doctor was called in, he declared his skill and science useless; she might live for some time, but she would never speak or walk again.

(To be Continued.)





[A BITTER FATE.]

## THE LOVE PACT.

### CHAPTER XIX.

One fatal remembrance—one sorrow that throws  
Its bleak shade alike o'er all joys and all woes—  
To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,  
For which joy hath no balm and affliction no sting.  
MOORE.

In a small but luxuriously appointed room of the Château D'Aubriion, which was set apart as the peculiar retreat of the marquis, the owner sat in deep meditation.

The last few days had effected a great change in the appearance of the old noble.

His proud face was not less haughty, his firm tread not less elastic than of yore, but those who held daily intercourse with him were nevertheless conscious that since the day when he left the château on the secret mission a shadow of unbroken gloom had fallen upon the marquis.

The olden interest in the numerous details of an extensive establishment, with its wide lands and many cares, seemed altogether lost.

His fields, his horses, his dogs, appeared to possess no further charm for the marquis.

He shunned the face of his fellow-man, with the marchioness he held little intercourse, and absolutely avoided his daughter's presence.

In the solitude of this little chamber—half study, half counting-house—which led by a low door to the iron-bound muniment room of D'Aubriion, the moody man would sit hour after hour with a blank, undiscerning gaze fixed on the distant landscape.

The notary had made many efforts to obtain a secret interview with his master, but in vain.

On the last occasion the marquis had given way to a fit of ungovernable and inexplicable passion and used angry threats towards his confidential and crafty man of business.

Cochart notwithstanding had come to the château this day with the hope of finding his

employer more tractable, as he had matters to arrange before departing for England on his errand of inquiry.

The various members of the family, which at present included Georges, who was passing a few days at the château before returning to Paris, all noticed and felt concern at the change which had come over the head of the family.

The Parisian instinctively connected it with the discovery at the village post-office, and Hélène coincided in this opinion.

Who this Norman girl that had fled to England might be they knew not, but agreed that the perusal of her letters was the cause of the marquis's strange apathy.

The Parisian had given his brains much more work during the past few days than he usually troubled them with.

Who can this Eugénie be? he asked himself a hundred times.

He remembered to have heard that some descendant of the elder branch of the D'Aubriions whose chief lost his head by the guillotine of Marat was supposed to exist.

Could this girl be she? And was his kinsman concerned in keeping her in seclusion?

He put the thought away from him decisively.

Whatever his uncle might do Georges felt that a dishonourable act was impossible to the grand old aristocrat, whose motto might have been fitly the high-hearted "Noblesse oblige."

No.

The girl was either some obscure relative or, Georges thought, with the lightness of Parisian morality, the child of some village beauty who might in past days have won for awhile his uncle's heart yet not have shared the shelter of his name, but, dying, left a pledge of affection to his care.

Of all the small home circle the marchioness seemed to take the change in her husband's manner the most deeply to heart.

It was not that she felt the present neglect too poignantly, for the marquis had never been a demonstrative partner, and, as years

had rolled on, and the Marquise D'Aubriion turned more and more to the consolation of religion, a sentiment akin to indifference towards his wife grew up in the bosom of the ex-soldier of the Republic, who was often wont to use the rude language of the camp in speaking of priests or confession.

Yet on this particular occasion the marquis had requested an interview with his wife, and the hour appointed was sounded from the little pendule where the grotesque bronze figures of Time and Death gave notice of the passage of the hours.

The old man rose and paced the room with long, slow steps.

"Yes, let what will befall, this life-long cherished scheme shall be carried out. Then—ah, then I care not how soon death comes. This last blow has stricken me sorely."

He left the room and walked deliberately along the polished floor of the picture gallery, his eyes bent, not on the "counterfeit presentments" of his ancestors but fixed on the little patterns of coloured wood which formed the parquet surface upon which he trod.

Thrice he paced slowly from end to end of the long gallery, as though to gain courage or time.

Then, passing on, he reached his wife's boudoir, and, tapping at the door with a strange timidity, entered in response to her request.

It was a charming apartment, furnished in the most exquisite style of French taste.

The satin-wood panelling was enriched by fairy landscapes the product of artists of high repute, and the curved ceiling had been enriched with garlands of flowers in bright tints by no mean hand.

The rich carpet, the sea-green satin-covered chairs and couches, the rare bric-a-brac which ornamented consoles and tables, all testified to the wealth and taste of the occupant.

One object alone, pushed back into a recess and half hidden by a diaphanous drapery of finest lace, was in strange contrast to the luxurious surroundings.

It was the prie-dieu of the marchioness, the chair on which she knelt to offer her frequent prayers to Heaven—a heavy frame of ebony thickly studded on seat and back with bosses of shining, well-worn iron of sharpness nearly sufficient to penetrate the skin.

Morn and night and many hours of each day a miserable woman, almost denuded of her rich array, knelt in self-sought agony thereon and poured forth with strong sobs and tears petitions for mercy to high Heaven.

The marquis glanced at the object with a slight frown as he seated himself.

"Cécile," he said, looking with a faint smile at his wife's wasted, sorrowful face, "I desired this interview because I have news for you."

The lady bent her head in acquiescence.

"Good news should come first. Is it not so?"

"Go on, mon ami," said the marchioness. "Tell me that thou hast to say as speedily as may be. To a woman who has lost worldly hope all things are alike indifferent. Were it possible indeed that any appeals of mine could induce thee to do justice to one sorely wronged I might feel some interest in things of earth—but I know thy heart is adamant to my words."

"On that subject, Cécile, yes. But thou must cast aside for the present the gloomy thoughts to which thou givest too much sway. Be now a happy mother, preparing for the brightest day in a daughter's life. Be ready to appoint her trousseau, and see that she leaves her old home as becomes my daughter."

The marchioness clasped the thin white fingers which lay in her lap with a fierce effort for self-control.

"Is then all decided, my husband?"

"Everything, Cécile. I have just received a letter from Lord Thanet. In one month from to-day Captain Mostyn will arrive in Paris. Hélène's espousal will immediately follow, as Monsieur le Capitaine cannot be long absent from England."

The marchioness turned a despairing look at her husband's inflexible face.

"Stay!" he said, stopping her speech by an imperative gesture. "Trouble me no more with entreaties which are futile. I have my own woes to bear. Danger and disaster are impending over the house of D'Aubryon, and I would husband my failing strength to meet them. But the object on which my heart is set shall first be carried out."

"The sin of this act of desperate injustice is on your head, my husband. I pray Heaven pardon you. I do not know to what your dark allusion points. Are you ill? What is the danger?" said the marchioness, looking at her husband's haggard face with apprehension.

"I am well. The other matters relate to business, which you do not comprehend."

"Beware of Cochart, my husband. I distrust him; and if any danger is at hand it is of his compassing."

"Chut, Cécile! you know not of these matters. Say no more, but inform Hélène presently of her approaching happiness."

Though he would not have confessed it to himself, the marquis shrank from becoming the bearer to his daughter of intelligence he dreaded would prove all unwelcome.

"I will obey you, my husband. I have in my turn though a favour to ask of you."

"Name it, Cécile."

"When Hélène has parted from my side for England my sad, dull hours will become doubly sorrowful. I seek some means to mitigate their heaviness. There is one—"

She paused abruptly.

"Well?"

The marchioness rose from her seat and stood beside her husband's chair, taking one of his hands in hers.

"There is one—I may not name her here—but she who has suffered—will ever suffer from grievous wrong done by us both. Let me have her to be as a companion—a dependent stranger. If it may not be that she can come here let me retire to some comparatively humble retreat where I can train her young mind and undo perhaps some little portion of the wrong. What

to me is this splendour? It brings naught of comfort or consolation—it does not even bind to me a husband's heart, for day by day thy face grows sterner, thy speech less tender. Yet I would not leave for ever these proud old halls—nor thee, my husband. But let me enjoy these seclusion of some safe and quiet retreat and let her be my companion."

A tortured look swept over the old man's countenance as he averted his head.

"It has come," he muttered to himself.

"This thing cannot be, Cécile; think of it no more," he said, aloud.

"Oh, my husband, make not now this decision—grant me this permission on Hélène's nuptial day. And till then let me have the long-promised letters from M<sup>me</sup>. Christine. I must at least have them."

"Cécile," said the marquis, sternly, with his head still turned from his wife, "I—have—no—letters!"

"What?"

Her fingers closed over the marquis's hand with the rigidity of steel.

"She has not written for many weeks."

"And you—you have not sought her—you know nothing of the orphan?"

"Have mercy, my wife. Remember that yours is not the only wrong heart."

"Tell me—quick—tell me!"

"M<sup>me</sup>. Christine permitted the girl to go on some mad search for a lover in England, and has herself removed to Paris—and—and—I have heard nothing further from her."

The marchioness pressed one hand convulsively to her side.

"How then know you this?" she cried, in quick accents. "Ah! I understand your journey that day. You learned the truth then. Oh, Heaven! she is lost! and we are—what are we?"

"Peace, Cécile! Have mercy!"

"Does she live?"

"I know not."

"Swear it! Swear on your soldier's honour that she lives!"

The marquis hesitated.

The last few lines which Eugénie had penned ere she sought refuge in the charcoal fumes stood out on his memory in letters of fire.

No—he could not take that oath.

"Cécile, I swear to you that I hope she still lives, and—"

The marchioness gave a despairing cry which rang shrilly through the alcoves of the roof and the corridor beyond.

"Oh, wretched woman! Oh, man dishonoured and perjured! Has the devious career of secrecy and falsehood then led us to this? Murderers! Our hands are red with innocent blood! And thou—thou who couldst dream in such an hour of wedding-rites in honour of a murderer's daughter! Oh, Hélène—Hélène—Eugénie!"

The shrill tones rang out with irrepressible and hysterical power, despite the efforts of the marquis to arrest them.

In his agitation the old noble had not heard the sound of hasty feet in the corridor without, but now the door was opened and Hélène rushed in and fell upon her mother's neck.

"Hélène, Hélène, you are lost! Oh, Heaven! Eugénie! Eugénie!"

And without a cadaverous face, to which exultant triumph lent the semblance of a fiend, peeped forth from the doorway of the picture gallery and drank in the torture-shrieks as though they were sweet music to the ear.

## CHAPTER XX.

She rose—she sprang—she clung to his embrace, Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face. Her long, dark hair lay floating o'er his arms, In all the wildness of dishevelled charms; Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt, So full—that feeling seem'd almost unfeelt.

BYRON.

In the neat little keeping-room of Robert Wilmer's cottage two anxious women kept watch for the return of the master of the house.

The ruddy, wrinkled, kindly countenance of the old Yorkshirewoman wore an expression of

apprehension akin to actual fear, and Eugénie's beautiful face reflected the look.

Mrs. Wilmer sat motionless, save for a nervous twitching of her aged hands, which trembled too much to allow of her guiding the bright steel pins with which she had made a futile faint of knitting, until at last hands and worsted alike sank into her lap.

Eugénie on the contrary was in constant restless movement. A dozen times she left her chair by the fireside opposite Mrs. Wilmer to cross over and peer through the little diamond-shaped panes of greenish glass which formed the casement.

Then, with careful regard that the keen breeze did not sweep into the little room—for, as in many cottages of its kind, the outer door opened directly upon the main room of the little dwelling—Eugénie would cautiously unlatch the portal and glance anxiously across the wide, drear expanse of snow.

Hour after hour passed. The grey clouds and eddying snowflakes closed in more quickly the brief day, and winter's short twilight cast a shadowy veil over the white world, the few bare trees, and the village of pitmen's cottages.

Eugénie turned with a troubled face from a last endeavour to pierce the gloom, and, going across the room and placing one hand on the back of the antique chair in which Mrs. Wilmer sat, she stooped and kissed the aged woman's brow tenderly.

"My mère," the girl whispered, for Mrs. Wilmer had so endeared herself to the orphan that "mother" in her own tongue seemed the only appellation worthy to express her love. "Ma mère, this is terrible, even to me, the stranger. What then must it be to thee? This to thee tears the heart. Canst thou endure for a little space to sit here alone and I will go across the moor and learn where Robert is and when he will return to us?"

"Child," responded Mrs. Wilmer, in an agitated tone, "you must not think of it. The night draws on apace. You would perish in the snow, or perchance fall into evil hands, for I fear much that mischief is in the hearts of many this night—the even when the angels sang of peace."

"I fear not, ma mère. I am young and strong. The snow—chut! I can find my way, for I know the path well. Permit me to go; I beg of thee."

But Mrs. Wilmer was inflexible. Robert was a man; he had gone in pursuance of the call of duty, and she trusted him to the protection of Heaven. But she would never sanction the perilous quest on which Eugénie desired to go.

While the girl was still pressing her purpose a dull sound struck her ear. She sprang from Mrs. Wilmer's side to the window.

Dimly discernible, a dark moving object could be made out on the white moor at some distance.

"Grace au Ciel! ma mère!" cried Eugénie, in a joyous voice; "they are coming!"

Mrs. Wilmer rose from her chair, threw a thick shawl over her head and stepped to the door, which the girl had already opened wide.

A deadened sound of many feet on the soft snow—a deep, indistinguishable murmur of voices sounded on the air.

As the dark shadow drew nearer it became clear that it consisted of a numerous body of men, some mounted, but the majority on foot, escorting a vehicle and proceeding at a hand pace, the snow rendering the horses unable to move more quickly.

Save for the sounds of converse amongst the members of the group there was something in the slow-progressing and dark shadow which gave the air of a funeral cortège to the advancing mass.

It had now come near to the cottage.

The firelight streamed out from the open door between the women and fell ruddily upon the white surface beyond; but no cheery voice of Robert sounded a hearty hail to this beacon of the hearth.

The women's hearts fell, and Mrs. Wilmer clung to her companion for support.

On came the throng, its members visible now, but unrecognisable in the heavy twilight, save



that the fireglow from door and window flashed on the accoutrements of the mounted men.

Some of those amongst the number who were on foot gathered round the vehicle and carefully lifted therefrom a still, motionless form.

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Wilmer," one of them cried, in an assuring tone. "There is no need, I hope. I would have ridden on in advance but it was impossible through these snow-drifts. Your son has met with an accident, but all will be well."

At sound of the voice Eugénie had sprung forward, then retreated into the house, and, reeling back as if from some sudden blow, fell into a chair with one hand pressed tightly over her heart, while the quick breath parted her pale lips and a look of strange terror came into her eyes.

"Be careful, lads," continued the spokesman. "Lift his head. Cheerily, Mr. Wilmer, we'll not hurt you."

It was Captain Mostyn.

Carefully and tenderly many strong arms carried their burden across the threshold, the soldier supporting the wounded man's head.

Wilmer's face was ashy pale and stained by blood and smoke, his fair hair dank with the sweat of pain from his clammy brow, his clothes dripping with water, and, mingling ominously therewith, a small dark red rivulet trickled slowly from his side.

Yet with a brave effort the young man opened his heavy eyelids and strove to call up a feeble smile as Mrs. Wilmer tottered forward.

"It's all right, mother," he shaped his pale lips to utter. "Don't be frightened."

"They carried him to the couch which stood on one side of the room and laid him gently upon it."

A strange group they looked, those rough pit-men, with the marks of a severe affray evident on their bruised faces and torn attire.

Why was it that only one of the women who loved him well hung over the engineer's prostrate form?

Where was the girl whose life he had saved—she to whom he had given an asylum from the cruel world?

Eugénie had cast one pitying glance at the wounded man from between the lifted hands that hid her face, but she did not rise from the chair into which she had sunk.

Her shaded eyes were bent upon one face only—that of Captain Mostyn.

It was impossible to discern his features, blackened as they were by smoke and begrimed with dust—but could she ever mistake that voice or fail to recognise that kingly form?

Yet, if she was right, if that man, towering above those who stood around the couch, was indeed he who had won her heart in those old, happy days, what was he now to her? Had he not cast away the simple maiden heart that trusted him? Had he not left the one whom he had vowed to love and protect to starve and to die?

A tide of bitter memories surged tumultuously through Eugénie's heart. She rose, unheeded by those who stood around the wounded man, she made a step as to go towards the stricken son and pallid mother to proffer her little aid. But it might not be. A clearer view of Captain Mostyn's countenance left no doubt of his identity, and Eugénie tottered back with a face deathly pale to the inner door, which gave entrance to the staircase in an effort to reach her own chamber as a stricken animal seeks the solitude of uninterrupted shelter.

She lifted the primitive latch with trembling fingers, crossed the threshold, and closed the door behind her.

Then endurance failed, and the girl with a little shuddering sob sank down at the stairfoot insensible.

Within the room she had left Captain Mostyn was busily engaged about Robert Wilmer's couch.

The soldier was well accustomed to the sight of wounded men and not entirely ignorant of surgical usage.

He had learned it indeed in a bitter school—on that bleak Crimean plateau where in the dull

November gloom the baffled legions of the Muscovite retired from before the thin line of Englishmen who again and again hurled them back.

Mostyn, as he had been bravest in the battle, was, "when the fight was done," most assiduous of all to succour alike helpless Briton and writhing Russ.

Through the heavy fog which shrouded the battle ground none had toiled more energetically to gather the groaning, helpless remnants of

The tools,  
The broken tools that tyrants cast away  
By myriads when they dare to pave their way  
With human hearts

to that vain dream of despots—universal empire.

With dry eyes and set mouth Hugh Mostyn had toiled, foodless, sleepless, on that errand of mercy—breaking down but once, when, coming upon an English battery, he found the corpse of a man well known and loved—that sergeant who, surrounded by swarming foes, threw one arm around the useless cannon and sword in hand died as Englishmen have ever fallen, from Hastings and Agincourt to Waterloo and Lucknow.

With a grim pride the hard-faced soldiers counted the gaping wounds.

Fifty shining spikes of Russian steel had torn the gaps through which his life ebbed out, and over the hero dead Hugh Mostyn had let fall the manly tear he could not restrain.

A dozen rough, toil-hardened hands aided the captain now in his task, tenderly as a woman might have done.

The thick garments were ripped away, soft bandages were applied to the wounded side, and all was done that was possible under the circumstances.

"Mrs. Wilmer," said Captain Mostyn as he took the scissors from the mother's trembling fingers, "this wound, although severe, need not cause you any serious apprehension, I think. But Doctor Turner must soon arrive, and then we shall hear his opinion. Corporal Surtees rode off on the instant that Mr. Wilmer and myself were drawn from the waters of the frozen moat of the Dover House, and the doctor should be here by this."

As he spoke a dull thud of coming hoofs sounded outside, and the brisk, pleasant-looking surgeon, booted, and wrapped up to the eyes, entered immediately after.

Without any unnecessary words Doctor Turner stepped up to his now half-comatose patient and made a careful survey of his injuries.

"He'll do very well, Captain Mostyn," he said, cheerily. "The injuries are only superficial. Had they been an inch more to the right Mr. Wilmer would have been a dead man. Now, dame," he continued, looking at the aged face of the mother pinched by an expression of dull despair, "keep up a brave heart. We'll have your boy about again to hail the new year. Let me give him a revolver."

He drew a small phial from a pocket of his great-coat, and, calling for a glass of water, poured a portion of the contents therein and presented it to the pale lips of the wounded man.

Instinctively but with difficulty Robert Wilmer drank slowly a portion of the stimulant.

It seemed to give fresh life. He opened his eyes languidly and they sought his mother's face. In response the old Yorkshirewoman bent over and pressed a kiss upon his forehead.

Then Wilmer feebly extended his hand to seek that of Captain Mostyn.

That clasped, something still seemed wanting, and his eyes roamed slowly around the circle of faces.

"Mother—where—is she?" he asked, in a feeble tone of reproach.

The old woman looked around the room. She missed one face that should not have been absent.

Then she went to the door through which the girl had passed not long before and cried, in a weak voice, which still echoed her son's reproachful accents: "Janie! Janie!"

It was her nearest equivalent for the foreign name.

No answer.

She took one of the candles which had been lighted for the doctor from the mantelshelf and peered through the doorway.

A helpless mass of humanity lay prone on the lower stairs.

"The poor girl is ill!" cried Mrs. Wilmer, "and I thinking so hardly of her!"

She stepped forward and tried to raise the prostrate form.

Her strength was however unequal to the task, and, with a woman's reliance on manly power, the old woman called instinctively upon him who in her mind possessed it most fully.

"Captain Mostyn, oh, please come here and carry my daughter into the room."

Hugh Mostyn stepped forward and lifted the girl's slight form without an effort.

He brought her into the room, and, as the candlelight fell on her face, looked at it with some curiosity, for he had not been aware that Robert Wilmer had a sister.

Then a shout of uncontrollable exultation, of unmeasured, joy broke from his broad chest.

"Eugénie! Eugénie! my love! my love! I thank thee, kind Heaven! Found at last!—and mine!"

A passion of kisses rained on the girl's pallid brow and set lips—a flood of tears sprang into the deep blue eyes which bent over her—happy tears this time!

He heeded not the gaze of the astonished spectators.

What were they to him?

Did he not hold in his strong, encircling arms the woman who was all the world to him?

Slowly the blue-veined lids unclosed, waked to new life by the tender caress.

The soft brown eyes looked up wonderingly, doubtfully.

Then, all forgotten but the old love, the girl clasped her arms about the soldier's neck with one word only—but, ah! what undying love lay therein!

"Hughes!"

(To be Continued.)

## CONVICTED.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

THE Marquis of Mountheron took a seat beside Lady Vivian upon the garden bench, at her invitation, and it struck her for the first time that he was really a dandy, in his excessive daintiness and refinement and elegance of manners and attire.

"I am glad to see you looking so well, Vivian," said the marquis. "I almost feared to find you ill after your ordeal of yesterday. You were quite a heroine to bear with such superb self-possession the terrible torture of recollections such as yours necessarily were. There is nothing like perfect breeding and self-control. Of all our guests none dreamed what you must be suffering."

Lady Vivian regarded the sea with a far-off expression in her dusky eyes.

"It is a relief to me to see you so calm and cheerful this morning, Vivian," continued the marquis. "I take your cheerfulness as a sign that the old wounds have in a great measure healed over."

Still Lady Vivian did not answer. He took her silence for assent, and his gentle face brightened.

"I have thought," he continued, "that my long devotion to you must have at last aroused an answering affection within your breast. You know how I love you, Vivian; how I have loved you for years. I came here this morning to tell you all this anew, and to ask you again to be my wife."

The lady's proud, sweet mouth tightened a little in its expression, but still she did not look at him, nor answer him.

"Do you know," he asked, trying to smile, "that our friends, and even the castle servants, accepted your presence at my dinner last evening as an acknowledgment of our engagement?"

Lady Vivian looked at him now with a steady and even piercing gaze.

"Other ladies, my guests, attended your dinner," she said, quietly, "but their presence elicited no remark. I fear, Marquis, you gave direction to the rumour. Is it not so?"

His fair face reddened.

"All is fair in love and war," he returned, with an uneasy little laugh. "If I did point the arrow of rumour, Vivian, surely I had encouragement from you. You have been very kind to me of late. You came down to Clyffe-bourne at my request. You conquered your reluctance to visit Mount Heron, where you had suffered so much; and need I say how flattered I was, how overjoyed, when you yielded to my solicitations, and consented to visit my home? I interpreted that consent as a sign of your relenting, as a token of new favour. You have emboldened me to hope for more. Vivian, may not the patience and devotion of years be rewarded now?"

His voice had unexpected passion in it. In all her life Lady Vivian had never seen him so aroused and stirred.

He had seemed too mild and gentle for much depth of passion. She regarded him curiously.

"I cannot say that your declaration is entirely unexpected, Marquis," she said, slowly. "But, nevertheless, I hardly know what to reply to it."

"Thanks. Your indecision shows that you have not made up your mind to refuse me," said the marquis, gratefully.

"I have known you for many years," said Lady Vivian, "ever since I went to Mount Heron as a bride. You were Rowland Ingestre then, the same gentle, soft-mannered, pleasant gentleman you are now. I always liked you, Marquis, and I did not wonder that poor, unfortunate James liked you. He was very kind to you, was he not? He paid your debts again and again, he made you always welcome at the castle, and you were free to live there altogether if you would."

"Yes," assented the marquis, reflectively, "he was always good and kind to me."

"And what a strange fatality it was that made you his heir!" said Lady Vivian, musingly.

"A strange and terrible fatality!" said the marquis, shuddering.

"I said I had always liked you, Rowland. That is true. But one should love one's husband, and love is not a plant to grow at one's bidding."

"Love will come in time; after, if not before marriage," said the marquis, eagerly. "Give me but the chance, Vivian. Make me your husband, and I will take good care to win your love. I cannot fail in a matter that so fills my heart. Love will win love. Say that you accept me, Vivian, and make me the happiest man in all England."

"I cannot say that yet," said Lady Vivian, gently. "I have loved once, and my heart is true to the memory of that love. Stratford Heron, dishonoured under the ignominy of an awful and shameful doom, still holds my love and fidelity—"

"What madness is this, Vivian? You love Stratford still? A man found guilty of murder and condemned to die upon the scaffold—"

"But innocent of the murder for which he was condemned as one of His angels in heaven!" interrupted Lady Vivian, her dusk eyes flushing.

"Innocent, you say? Vivian, are you wild? Innocent! Why, he was tried by a jury of his peers! His father's friend was the judge who sentenced him! Innocent! For the first time since the occurrence of that awful tragedy I have heard that word 'innocent' coupled with the name of Stratford Heron! Innocent! My poor Vivian, do you know that word contains a frightful arraignment against the jury, the judge, against the very Crown?"

Lady Vivian turned upon her lover swiftly. "You knew him well," she said. "Do you believe him guilty?"

"How can I believe him otherwise, in face of

all that terrible evidence elicited upon the trial?" asked the marquis, gently. "He had reason to expect benefit from his brother's death. I believe he killed him. But I do not believe he did so premeditatedly, and so I said at the trial. I tried to excuse his awful crime, if there could be found excuse for it. I think he went to his brother's room with a view to reconciliation. The marquis was hard and bitter, and no doubt goaded him to madness. Yes, he must have been mad when he committed that awful crime."

"Mad or sane, Stratford Heron was too noble to commit a murder. No impulse could so have changed his nature. You are wrong, Marquis. I know that he was innocent!"

The marquis smiled in sorrowful pity at her infatuation.

"Do you suppose that he is really dead?" asked Lady Vivian, abruptly.

The marquis started.

"Of course he is dead!" he exclaimed. "He escaped, and was traced to Rio Janeiro, whither he went under an assumed name. He died out there in Brazil—his death is an established fact! What impels you to ask so strange a question?"

"I have dreamed of him for the last three nights," said the Lady Vivian. "And in my dreams I see him alive and well, but struggling with a woe which infects me so that I awake in a frame of mind gloomy beyond description."

"Strange that you dream of him more than formerly."

"I think that Miss Strange reminds me of him. It is one of those remarkable and unaccountable chance resemblances we sometimes read about—for she certainly resembles him!"

"And as certainly resembles you," said the marquis; "but, as you say, the resemblance is chance, and it is not altogether tangible. You cannot pick it to pieces, nor trace it feature by feature. But we are wandering wide of the subject. Let us return to it. Have I served long enough for my reward, Vivian?"

"We were speaking of Stratford. He is dead, and his name and memory are dishonoured. His trial is a cause célèbre. He is regarded as a monster of wickedness. I feel that I cannot bear this. His name should be cleared of the ignominy resting upon it. He was innocent: he must be proved innocent."

"What, now, after eighteen years! When he is dead? Who can be harmed by his shame?"

"I, Marquis!"

"You, Vivian? Why, you obtained a divorce from him! You no longer bear his name. Your child is dead. How can his shame affect you?"

"It was my father who instituted that suit for divorce. I would gladly bear my husband's name to-day! And my fidelity and love to him have never once swerved—never! Rowland, you say you love me. As he hears me, I know from my own convictions that my husband was innocent of the crime laid to his charge. Find the real murderer of the marquis, clear Stratford's name, and I will marry you!"

She looked at him with dusk eyes glowing, her face all animation.

He fell back from her, his complexion livid, his manner that of one stricken with despair and horror.

"Will love inspire you with courage and keenness for this work?" she asked. "Detectives have failed, but you, if you love me, may succeed. You have my promise, Rowland. Vindicate my husband, who, if he were living, would be to-day Marquis of Mountheron, and I will thank you on my knees. More, I will marry you, and be to you the best wife man ever had. Will you do it?"

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE proposition of Lady Vivian took Lord Mountheron completely by surprise. He looked as if he had received some deadly blow.

His livid countenance, his eyes full of horror, his swift recoil, all declared that Lady Vivian's word had given him a terrible shock.

He looked from her to the sea, but his eyes beheld neither the shimmering waters nor the white sails upon them. Lady Vivian kept her

eager, dusk eyes fixed upon him in a breathless anxiety and suspense.

"This is madness, Vivian," he said at last, huskily. "I believed myself upon the threshold of success, and here you place an obstacle between us which is insurmountable. It is absolute madness to think of clearing the name of Lord Stratford Heron?"

"Why so?" asked Lady Vivian, trying to speak calmly.

"Because that name is so covered with infamy that no power under heaven can clear it!" declared the marquis.

"But I tell you he was innocent. Truth will come to the surface; his innocence can be proved, if only someone like you would devote his energies to the task," urged Lady Vivian.

"No one but you believes him innocent. Pardon me, dear Vivian, but I must tell you the truth," said Lord Mountheron, with extreme gentleness, turning his pale visage towards her. "You force the truth from me. No one in all England, of all who knew him best, believes Lord Stratford Heron innocent of his brother's murder. He was tried by a jury of his peers, found guilty of fratricide, and condemned to die."

"But men have been found guilty before him of crimes they never committed," persisted Lady Vivian, "and innocent men have been hanged!"

"Vivian, I never dreamed that you cherished such mad ideas, such insane delusion," cried the marquis, wiping his forehead. "Your judgment is biased. Think of the testimony against him. He was guilty."

"I say that he was not," interrupted Lady Vivian, with passionate emphasis.

"Have you any proof of his innocence?"

"Proof? No. If I had, do you not suppose that I would have gone with it to the very throne and demanded justice? Proof? No, I have no proof, and yet I know that he was innocent. I know that he was incapable of wrong-doing. You tell me that you love me, Rowland. Stratford was your kinsman: help me to clear his name, and I will give you gratitude, and—and affection."

The marquis appeared to debate within himself.

He was silent for some time; then he said quietly:

"I do not wish to favour your strange delusion, Vivian, but I would do anything to win you. You are suffering an hallucination. Stratford was guilty. So many years have passed that you have forgotten much of the evidence. Possibly you never read it all. I will go over the whole case, sift the testimony sentence by sentence, and prove to you Stratford's guilt. If I convince you of that will you not consent to marry me?"

Lady Vivian did not immediately reply. The proposition seemed to her monstrous. He repeated the question.

"I was about to say no," she answered at last. "For if I were to be convinced of Stratford's guilt I would never trust any human being again. Believe him, the noblest, the purest, the grandest soul I ever knew, guilty of a foul, unnatural and awful crime? Then I disbelieve for ever in truth and goodness anywhere. Doubt him? Then I doubt everybody. But as I know that you can never convince me I give you my promise that when I lose my faith in Stratford's innocence I will marry you."

The marquis's face brightened.

"I shall enter upon my task without delay," he said, briefly. "I have a printed volume containing the history of the trial. I will glance it over and notice the important points of evidence. Read it carefully and candidly, Vivian, and you will give up your present wild delusion."

"And if I am but confirmed in my belief?"

"That is impossible. I will do anything you wish, undertake any task however impossible, but I already foresee the result. Stratford has been dead many years; you have long since been freed from association with his memory, and have ceased to bear his name. I love you, Vivian. Marry me. Let me announce our engagement to our friends, and when once we are married



the last shadow of the hateful past will drift from you. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.'

"I cannot do that. He is in my thoughts continually; even were I to marry you, Rowland, his memory would always be dearer to me than any living being. I loved him, not for the brief hour of his prosperity, when he was the favourite of society, the idol of his friends, but for all time; when he lay in prison, accused of a horrible crime, abandoned by his friends, and condemned to die; when he wandered a fugitive in foreign lands, and when he lay in his nameless and dishonoured grave. Then, in his need and bitter anguish, I loved him most. You know how my father restrained me of my liberty, and refused to allow me to see my husband in prison. You know that it was against my wish that the suit for divorce was brought. I never once swerved in my love and faith in my husband, never! never! And the greatest sorrow I have is that he never knew that I was true to him through all, and I always trusted him. He died believing me turned against him, and one of his bitterest enemies," and Lady Vivian's voice quivered. "I shall never be able to bury the past, for it is not dead to me, Rowland. Yet, if you will clear Stratford's name I will give you all I can, my esteem, my companionship, myself."

"And the same if I convince you of his guilt?"

Lady Vivian assented, with an incredulous curl of her lips.

The colour returned to the marquis's face; the light to his mild eyes, the life and animation to his figure.

"I shall be able to announce our betrothal in a few days, Vivian," he said, confidently. "I will go home and hunt up the records of the trial. If you feel adequate to an examination of the butler and a few others, you could easily convince yourself of the truth. May I send some of those old witnesses over to you?"

"Not yet. I may desire to examine them later."

The marquis arose.

He was quite cheerful again, and spoke pleasantly of a further exchange of hospitalities, and then took his leave.

Lady Vivian watched him as he crossed the lawn and joined the amusement-seekers, with that odd expression on her superb face that had so startled and perplexed Alex the day before.

She saw him presently remount his horse, and canter down the avenue and out upon the Bluff road.

(To be Continued.)

## FEMALE SOCIETY.

WITHOUT female society we should degenerate into brutes. This observation applies with tenfold force to young men and those who are in the prime of manhood. For, after a certain time of life, the literary man may make a shift (a poor one, I grant) to do without the society of ladies. To a young man nothing is so important as a spirit of devotion, next to his Creator, to some amiable woman, whose image may occupy his heart and serve to guard it from pollution, which besets it on all sides. A man ought to choose his wife, as Mrs. Primrose did her wedding-gown, for qualities that "wear well."

One thing at least is true, that if matrimony has its cares, celibacy has no pleasures. A Newton or a mere scholar may find employment in study; a man of literary taste can receive in books a powerful auxiliary; but a man must have a bosom friend and children round him to cherish and support the dearth of old age.

## PLEASANT BEDROOMS.

THERE is nothing more indicative of refinement and genuine culture in a family than bright, cheerful, and tastefully-decorated bed-

rooms. Tasteful decorations do not necessarily mean expense, and it is possible to make a chamber look very pretty at a small outlay. Indeed, in many instances, no outlay at all will be required beyond what would be incurred under any circumstances.

The women of a family especially are apt to pass a good portion of their time in their bed-chambers, and in some households the sleeping apartments are used alike for sewing rooms, sitting-rooms and nurseries. It is worth while to obtain all the innocent pleasure we can find in this life, and there can be no doubt that life is pleasanter if most of its hours are passed in cheerful-looking apartments.

## THE LORD OF STRATHMERE; OR, THE HIDDEN CRIME.

### CHAPTER III.

WHEN morning dawned upon Strathmere Park, the pale grey beams of light fell upon a strange, white world.

The terraces and gardens, the park, and the wide avenues were covered with a snowy shroud of glittering purity, from the midst of which rose the stately palace of Strathmere, with all its grandeur and magnificence covering the horror of that upper chamber.

The snow had ceased falling. The sun shone with sickly yellow beams. The park labourers and gardeners fell to work at clearing away the paths and porches, an unwonted labour, for so heavy a fall of snow had not been known in Sussex in twenty years.

The servants were astir at an early hour, for the Lord of Strathmere, like most elderly people, had been an early riser, and he was a martinet in household discipline.

The kitchens were alive with bustle when Dean, Lord Strathmere's valet, made his appearance.

He was an honest fellow of middle age, who had been reared upon the estate, and who was devoted to the family interests.

It was his earliest morning duty to procure a can of hot water to temper his master's invariable bath, and he proceeded to fulfil that duty now.

He stopped to talk a moment with "one of the maids, and then, with the can of hot water, hastened upstairs.

He opened his master's door. No querulous voice greeted him as usual from the curtained bed.

He set down his can by the hearth, drew the drapery aside at the windows, and stirred the still lingering embers of the fire, putting on fresh fuel.

Then he approached the bedside and gazed in through the parted curtains.

The sight that met his gaze held him for a moment spell-bound.

The ghastly face on the pillow, with the eyes still closed as they had been in sleep, the pinched features rigid in death, and the sunken breast with its gaping wound and awful stain of life-blood, presented a vision that seemed to sear the eyeballs of the gazer.

The next minute he pulled the bell frantically, and sprang to the door, filling the hall with his cries.

The servants came trooping to the scene.

Ralph Chandos, springing from his bed, and throwing on hastily only the most necessary garments, ran into the hall, and almost at the same instant Norman Brabazon, dishevelled and scantily arrayed, made his appearance.

"What is the matter, Dean?" cried Chandos, all alarm. "Has my uncle a fit?"

Dean wrung his hands wildly.

"He's dead! My lord is dead!" he shrieked. "He's been murdered!"

The butler, who had reached the very threshold of the baron's chamber, recoiled swiftly, and fixed a horrified gaze upon Chandos.

"Murdered!" repeated our hero, not noticing that strange regard. "Impossible! Let me pass, Dean! My uncle may be dead—but murdered? No, that is incredible!"

Dean retreated into his master's room.

Chandos, Brabazon, and the servants followed.

A wild scene of confusion and terror ensued.

It was found that the body of the murdered man was quite cold. He had been dead for hours.

And after that first glance at the remains of mortality and at the gaping wound in the baron's breast, it was noticed that young Chandos was silent as if stunned, looking dazed by the shock she had received.

It was noticed, too, by the imitative servants that Brabazon looked at his cousin askance and as in horror of him, and they, too, drew away, and interpreted his shocked silence to his hurt.

"Ralph," cried his treacherous cousin, sharply, "are you going to do nothing? Oh, my poor uncle! Who could have been so wicked as to murder you?" and he put his handkerchief to his eyes.

"What should I do?" asked Chandos, still bewildered by the horror that had come over him.

"Send for a physician, for the police, for the coroner!" cried Brabazon. The murderer must be discovered. Let no one but the messengers leave the house. Millis," and he turned to the butler, "send messengers at once, and do not let my uncle's body be touched by anyone. It must not be disturbed until the coroner comes!"

Millis bowed assent and directed three of the grooms to mount the best horses in the stable and proceed to Lewes, and summon to the scene of the tragedy the family physician, the coroner, and the police.

The men hurried away upon their errand.

"And now," said Brabazon, taking direction of affairs, "let all leave the room, and let a watch be set at the door to prevent intrusion. Let the windows and doors throughout the house remain as they are, so that the manner of the murderer's escape may the more easily be discovered."

His air of authority compelled ready obedience, Millis seconded his orders, driving his subordinates from the room.

Ralph Chandos stood at the bedside and looked long and earnestly upon the face of the murdered man.

His uncle had never shown him affection, but he had been kind to him, had brought him up, his parents having died years before, had given him every advantage of culture and education, and Chandos had felt for him a grateful regard, even if he had not actually loved him.

It was impossible to look upon him lying thus, stark and murdered, without being deeply shocked, and without a sense of profound pity and sorrow, but Millis noticed that he shed no tears and betrayed no strong emotion, except that his features grew stern and white.

"If you please, Mr. Ralph," he said—"I beg pardon, my lord—but if your lordship has any orders to give—"

Chandos started at the title by which he was addressed. It scarcely yet dawned upon him that he was now Lord Strathmere.

"I have no orders to give, Millis," he said, hoarsely. "Do as Mr. Brabazon has directed. I suppose some effort ought to be made to discover the murderer, but we can wait for that until the police arrives."

He followed Brabazon from the room.

Millis closed the door and set a guard before it.

Shocked and almost stunned at the suddenness of the awful calamity that had overtaken his uncle, Chandos retired to his own chamber and Brabazon also secluded himself.

The servants gossiped together, whispering darkly their suspicions in regard to the commission of the crime.

Ralph Chandos had been dearly loved by them all, and none knew better than they his nobility of soul, his fine sense of honour, his generosity and unselfishness.

Yet had he not quarrelled with his uncle upon the previous day?

Had he not been ordered to leave Strathmere Park upon this very morning?

Had not his uncle defeated his dearest hopes for his future?

And had he not, in a single night, and by this very death, leaped from the position of dependent upon a churlish old man to the possession of one of the noblest titles and richest estates of England?

Had he not powerful motives for his uncle's murder?

The men, in spite of their love for Ralph Chandos, shook their heads sorrowfully and went about with gloomy faces.

Breakfast was sent up to Chandos and to Brabazon in their separate apartments.

The former spent the entire morning in seclusion.

Upon performing his ablutions, he discovered the water tintured with blood in his washbasin, and the discovery amazed him.

It was plain to him that the murderer had entered his dressing-room to remove the traces of his crime.

In his horror at the supposed narrowness of his own escape from a fate similar to that of his uncle, he was still regarding the evidence of the murderer's visit when Dean, the baron's valet, entered his dressing-room and surprised him.

The young man's start and confusion were misinterpreted by the valet.

He had come upon some simple errand, having been sent by Brabazon to ask for orders from the new Lord of Strathmere, and his keen eyes detected the contents of the wash-bowl at a glance.

"What is that, Mr. Ralph?" he asked, quickly.

"I don't know, Dean, any more than yourself," was the truthful response.

"It must be taken charge of," cried Dean, seizing upon the bowl. "Don't touch it, sir."

Chandos acquiesced without a thought that the contents of the bowl might be direct evidence against himself.

That anyone could suspect him of his uncle's murder had not even occurred to him.

He allowed Dean to lock the door of the dressing-room and remove the key, and made his toilet in his bath-room.

Dean noted the packed portmanteau just inside the door, and drew further conclusions unfavourable to our hero, but he kept his thoughts, for the present, to himself.

While Chandos remained in his own room, brooding upon the mystery, and slowly recovering from the shock he had received, Brabazon was promptly on hand on the arrival of the physician, the coroner, and the police-inspector, and rendered them active assistance in the performance of their duties.

He was full of theories in regard to the commission of the murder, and artfully avoided being the first to direct the suspicion of the officials against his cousin.

It was Millis, the butler, who nearly idolised Chandos, who, in his doubt and terror, pointed inquiry in the direction of his young master.

The police officers made, first of all, a thorough examination of all the doors and windows upon the lower floor of the mansion.

Every outlet had been found duly locked and bolted by the butler on his morning round. The snow without showed no sign of burglarious entrance. Every indication pointed to the supposition that the murderer was an inmate of the mansion.

At this stage of the inquiry Dean sought the inspector, and, in much agitation, privately informed him of his discovery in Chandos's dressing-room.

An immediate adjournment was made thither. Chandos had gone down to the library, and his rooms were thoroughly searched.

The fragment of blood-stained shirt was found

by the inspector in the ashes of the grate, and produced a profound sensation.

The investigation proceeded with increased thoroughness. The inspector peered up the chimney, but discovered nothing.

"If Chandos committed the murder," he muttered, "the dagger with which he did it can't be far off. He's not an old hand in crime. We shan't have much difficulty in finding the dagger."

The task proved less easy than he thought. A chimney-sweep was sent for and brought from the neighbouring village after the furniture had been examined to no effect, and the sooty urchin was put into the capacious chimney to look for hidden evidence. The cleverly-concealed dagger, with its recent blood-stains, was thus brought to light.

While these proceedings were in progress the physician had made his examination, and the coroner had made preparations to impanel a jury and proceed with his proper official investigation of the mystery.

Brabazon became the ruling spirit of the house, and was high in the confidence of the newly-arrived officials.

Mr. Pelham, who had ridden over to the Park on the first intimation of the tragedy, the news of which had spread like wild-fire, consulted with Brabazon apart, and speculated and indulged in various theories as to the author of the crime.

"How one night has changed the face of affairs!" he said, thoughtfully. "Last night I told Ralph that his engagement to Gerda must be ended. This morning he is Lord Strathmere, and one of the best matches in England. I am glad for my daughter's sake."

He paused. The police inspector was at his elbow, and a disagreeable expression upon the officer's face checked the further expression of his satisfaction at Chandos's improved prospects. He sought our hero in the library, shook hands with him warmly, assured him of Miss Pelham's sympathy in his affliction, and was so friendly and kind that Chandos could not fail to see that he was now regarded by the wealthy banker as not only an eligible suitor for Miss Pelham, but as one worthy of all honour and esteem. He smiled bitterly at the change in Mr. Pelham's manner.

The village of Strathmere, a respectable hamlet with its High Street, its smithy, its inn, and its half-dozen shops, belonged to the estate of Strathmere.

The murder of the baron produced an immense sensation in the village, and its inhabitants had come flocking to the scene of the murder. They were grouped about the grounds, in the hall, in the servants' quarters, and about the door of the upper chamber in which the old lord was lying cold.

A jury was impanelled without difficulty, comprising the most intelligent men of the vicinity, shop-keepers, farmers, chemist, inn-keeper, and one or two county gentlemen making up the number required.

The members of the household were closely interrogated. Brabazon gave his testimony with apparent reluctance, and in a manner to seriously damage his cousin.

Millis testified with real reluctance, and his testimony was even more damaging to Chandos. Dean added his evidence; the police inspector and his assistants contributed their share of the damaging chain of proofs against our hero. The case looked very dark against Chandos.

He was called upon to tell his story of his last interview with his uncle. He did so in a straightforward manner, but long before he had concluded he began to see that a wall of doubt and suspicion had been built up against himself, and not one word which he could say could assail it.

The new shock of this discovery made him paler still, and his young face took on an added sternness of expression which those who saw it took for the despair of guilt.

Even Mr. Pelham began to be infected by the air of suspicion and looked more coldly upon Chandos.

The coroner's jury finished their deliberations

with closed doors, bringing in a verdict that Edmund, Baron Strathmere, had been foully murdered, and that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, Ralph Chandos was his lordship's murderer.

Chandos had slowly returned to the library, where he expected Mr. Pelham to join him, but the banker did not come.

Unrestful, and tired of solitude, he went up to his own rooms.

They were in order again, and he dropped into a chair before the hearth, where he remained for hours in deep and anxious thought.

At last he arose wearily and walked to his window.

The afternoon was gathering into night, and already the shadows were gathering over the snowy landscape.

An impulse came upon him to go out for an hour for air and exercise.

He took up his hat, quitted his room, and descended the stairs.

As he opened the front door of the mansion a man, who had been lounging there for the last hour in an apparently aimless fashion, stretched out a hand to detain him.

"You cannot go outside, sir," he exclaimed.

The young man threw back his head proudly.

"And why not?" he demanded.

The man was spared the necessity of replying.

The police-inspector came forward, attended by two subordinates, and said, quietly:

"I have a warrant, Mr. Chandos, for your arrest. The carriage is at the door. Pray don't give us any trouble, or it will be the worse for yourself, sir."

Chandos staggered back, his noble face aghast.

"My arrest!" he exclaimed, incredulously.

"What for?"

The inspector's lips curled.

"As if you didn't know, sir!" he remarked.

"I arrest you, in the name of the Queen, for the wilful murder of Lord Strathmere. I am ordered by the magistrate to take you to the gaol at Lewes, and if you resist you will do so at your peril."

Chandos stared around him. The servants were grouped about.

Millis was crying.

Brabazon leaned against the wall, his handkerchief to his eyes.

The old housekeeper was sobbing at the foot of the stairs.

Everyone looked grave and shocked.

Chandos noticed with a pang that no one seemed surprised at his arrest, or exhibited faith in his innocence.

"You accuse me of killing my uncle?" he cried out, sharply. "It is false. I am innocent. I—"

"That remains to be proved at the trial," said the inspector, smoothly. "But come, sir. It's time for us to be off."

Chandos gave a swift glance at doors and windows, as if with a wild impulse of escape. His face was pale with his horror, agony, and shame.

The arrest had been so totally unlooked for—it seemed to him that he was the victim of an hallucination, or struggling in the terrors of a nightmare.

"I am innocent," he repeated, hoarsely.

"You are losing valuable time, the murderer will escape."

The inspector winked at his subordinates.

"We'll risk that," he said. "And now for the handcuffs, sir, just to make all safe, and we will go."

He advanced upon Chandos and suddenly slipped a pair of hand-cuffs upon him. Then he and his fellows hustled Chandos out to the cab, and the next minute our hero was on his way, closely guarded, to Lewes.

Brabazon looked out after the departing carriage, his face dark and inscrutable as ever.

"So he departs from Strathmere Park in danger and disgrace," he muttered. "He will never return—never! My little plan has been too much for him."

(To be Continued.)



## IMPROVEMENT IN BUTTER MAKING.

MR. EDWARD BURNETT, of Southboro', Mass., has discovered a way of obtaining one pound of butter from seventeen pounds of milk of the whole herd. The originator claims no patent on the system.

The arrangement consists of a quantity of tin pails, twenty inches in depth, holding eighteen quarts each, which are set in a sink or basin, holding about ten pails. The basin is provided with round holes, corresponding in diameter with the tin pails; twelve inches in length of the latter project below the bottom of the basin and eight inches remain above, the top being covered with an ice-chamber, holding about 200 pounds of ice. The ice-chamber is mounted on a little track, so that it may be easily moved, and when properly rested in place, locked by clamps, making the sink chamber nearly airtight. The ice melts into the basin but not into the milk, while the temperature of the water remains at 45 deg. to 50 deg. F. The natural temperature of the milk when poured into the pails is 92 deg. to 96 deg. F.

The size of the chamber is two and a-half by five feet; the sink, in this case holding ten pails, is capable of handling 360 quarts of milk in twenty-four hours, since the cream rises and is removed every ten hours.

The consequence of the reduction of temperature of the upper part of the pail is to induce a rapid circulation amongst all the component parts of the fluid. Thus every particle of cream is soon brought near the top, and being lighter than the bulk of the milk, accumulates a deal quicker than it would do without the enforced circulation.

## "ONLY A COMPANION."

THE carriage drove up the long, wide avenue, and stopped before the main entrance of Dexley Hall, one of the most beautiful places in Devonshire.

Miss Elliott descended with a beating heart. Though brought up in comparative luxury, for her father had been a successful physician, his death had left her penniless, and she was now coming to Dexley Hall as "companion" to the lady of the house.

But her nervousness disappeared, in part, at least, before the warm welcome of Mrs. Charlton.

"I am very glad to see you, my dear," she had said, kissing her, "I hope you'll be happy here."

An hour later, when she had changed her toilet, and smoothed the brown braids of her hair, wound like a coronet around her beautifully shaped head, she found herself, as in a dream, following Mrs. Charlton down the stairs and through the hall into the oak-fashioned dining-room.

A gentleman, blonde, tall, handsome, and distinguished-looking, turned as they entered.

"My brother, Sir Hugh Dexley," said Mrs. Charlton. "Hugh, Miss Elliott."

Marion glanced up shyly, wondering to find so young-looking a man, for she had fancied Sir Hugh to be venerable and grey-haired.

On his part, Sir Hugh was equally surprised. He had expected to see, in his sister's companion, a middle-aged woman, a widow, perhaps, or an old maid—prim, severe, sour.

He saw instead one of the loveliest faces he had ever beheld.

Several times during the dinner he addressed Marion on purpose to see the brown eyes raised for an instant to his own.

And then the quick droop of the darkly-fringed lids that followed with an unconscious blush.

After dinner, when the two ladies were alone in the drawing-room, Mrs. Charlton asked Marion to play a little if she were not too tired.

Our heroine sat down before the magnificent Erard, and ran her fingers carelessly over the keys for an instant; then began one of Beethoven's sonatas.

Her playing was excellent, and when she

finished the grandly beautiful symphony she began the wild, weird notes of a Swiss melody, in which one heard the tinkling of falling water-drops, mingled with the blast of the Alpine horn and the call of the mountain girl as she gathered her flock together, and the far-off din of rushing waters.

As the last note died away Mrs. Charlton exclaimed:

"Wherever did you learn to play like that, Miss Elliott?"

And in the same breath:

"Was it not beautiful, Hugh?"

Marion, looking quickly round, found she had a second listener in the tall, broad-shouldered baronet, who lounged in an arm-chair near the window.

"Beautiful, indeed," said Sir Hugh. "The highest praise I can give it is that I was forced to throw away my after-dinner cigar and come in to enjoy it."

Then, turning to Marion, he said, interrogatively:

"I am sure you sing, Miss Elliott. Do you not?"

Without a word Marion, striking a few chords, began "The Bridge."

Soft and low the words:

I stood on the bridge at midnight,

sounded in the quiet room.

Then higher and higher, and clearer and sweeter.

Until the marvellous voice again sank to a hushed and mournful tone at the words:

How often, oh, how often,

In the days that had gone by,

I had stood on that bridge at midnight,

And gazed on that wave and sky.

When she finished there was silence in the room, broken only by Sir Hugh's lowly spoken "Thanks" and Mrs. Charlton's more demonstrative praise.

The days passed quietly along, and Marion grew more contented than she could ever have believed possible for a "companion" to be.

They had very little society, for Mrs. Charlton was far from strong, and visiting and receiving tired her.

In the morning Marion read aloud for a little time after breakfast.

Then they walked or drove: then letters were written.

And after luncheon a little fancy work, more reading aloud, and occasional visits to Mrs. Charlton's pensioners in the village.

The evenings were always passed in the drawing-room.

Evening after evening Marion sang to the sister and brother, both enjoying the rich, sweet voice, which, to one, at least, grew sweeter and dearer every day.

It was a blissful period to Marion.

She did not know what made the skies seem so bright, and all life so beautiful. She never stopped to inquire.

She was woken from her dream at last.

One day the arrival of guests was announced for the following morning—the Fentons and Hillyards.

But when morning came Mrs. Charlton was too ill to receive her friends, having one of her severe headaches.

Her maid came to announce this to Marion.

"And Mrs. Charlton bade me tell you," she continued, "to take your morning walk as usual. She will not get up till luncheon, at all events."

Marion went down the broad stairs, it must be confessed, a little dreading the tête-à-tête breakfast with Sir Hugh.

She found herself alone in the breakfast-room, and stood, for a few minutes, at the open window, looking at the beautiful rose-garden, and inhaling the sweet breath of the early autumn flowers.

When Sir Hugh joined her he expressed great regret for his sister's headache, saying:

"She sent me word, however, that she would be able to sit up this afternoon. Meanwhile, Miss Elliott, I see the coffee urn is on the table. Allow me to escort you to it, so you may pour out my coffee for me."

Sir Hugh would gladly have lingered long over the breakfast, enjoying the dainty grace with which the young girl presided, and watching the delicate colour in her face, which, for some reason, was almost stationary.

The meal came to an end, however, as all pleasant things do, and after he had inquired of Marion how she would spend the morning, he had been quietly informed:

"In writing letters."

And he said:

"You will not go without your morning walk, surely?"

"My walk will be to take my letters to the post when I have finished writing them, Sir Hugh."

Sir Hugh consoled himself with the reflection that the library windows overlooked the path through the park, by which she would pass, and in his own mind decided that Miss Elliott would have company during her walk to the post.

He spent the morning in the library pretending to read, but really watching the path which wound under the trees in the direction of Bycliffe.

At last he caught sight of the graceful figure, but it was coming towards the Hall, not going away.

He bit his lip.

"Pon my honour," he said, "I believe that was done on purpose."

He had not heard the light footfall that passed the library door about ten o'clock, neither had he seen the slight figure which passed out of the long French window in the dining-room and through the rose garden to the circling path that led to the same gate as the one he had watched so intently.

As Marion came up the broad gravel path she caught a glimpse of the figure at the library window, and said to herself, as she smiled a little:

"I believe Sir Hugh intended to go with me this morning, but I have not forgotten that I am 'the companion.'"

No trace of Sir Hugh's vexation showed itself in his face when he met Miss Elliott at luncheon.

Mrs. Charlton was better, but sent word she was not going to dress till the arrival of her expected guests.

"I feel quite interested in your guests, Sir Hugh, or, at least, in one of them," said Marion, when they were seated at the table. "I have just found that one of the Misses Hillyard is the Constance Hillyard who was at school with me. She was such a beauty. She had blue eyes, long fair hair, a lovely complexion, and features resembling—"

"A wax doll," said Sir Hugh, as she hesitated.

Then he added:

"Have you seen her sister?"

"No," replied Marion. "Does she resemble Constance?"

"Not at all," said Sir Hugh. "Miss Hillyard is tall and stately, with smooth black hair, and, I think, grey eyes. She is like her brother, the future Sir John Hillyard."

As Sir Hugh lit his cigar after luncheon he gave way to no pleasant reflections.

"I am more than satisfied about that walk this morning," he said. "She is as proud as she is lovely. If that idiot, John Hillyard, falls in love with her, and he'll be sure to, for he can't help it, I shall have a nice, enjoyable time of it."

Marion Elliott had certainly no reason to complain of the warmth of Miss Constance Hillyard's greeting.

As soon as she had spoken to Mrs. Charlton she rushed towards Marion, exclaiming:

"It's Brownie."

And, to Sir Hugh's amusement, introduced the young girl to her sister and brother as:

"My old schoolmate, Brownie Elliott."

"Does that name, Brownie, belong to you, Miss Elliott?" said Sir Hugh, when the guests had gone to their rooms.

"It's too provoking," said Marion, laughing, "They always called me Brownie at school."



[A MOMENT FRAUGHT WITH FATE.]

"because I was so much darker than any of the other girls."

Sir Hugh looked at the clear, rich complexion, which, to him, was far more beautiful than purest pink or white, and said:

"It is too bad to have one's physical infirmities spoken of in that light manner."

After dinner all strolled out on the lawn in front of the house except Mrs. Charlton and Marion.

But when the lights were lit they returned to the drawing-room.

Constance immediately sat down near Marion, and began an animated conversation with her, and Sir Hugh enjoyed a *tete-à-tete* with Miss Hillyard in the opposite corner, and watched the two girls.

No greater contrast could possibly have been presented.

One, with fluffy masses of flaxen hair, resting on the white forehead.

Delicate pink cheeks and rose-bud mouth, the pretty jewelled hand that played with the tiny bell in the shell-like ear, and the graceful figure in the exquisite dress.

The other, equally graceful in figure, in clinging folds of sombre black, relieved only by masses of white tulle at throat and wrists, the large brown eyes and beautifully pencilled eyebrows, the clear, dark complexion, the crimson lips, and the magnificent rich brown hair, resting like a coronet above the lovely face, formed a picture which Sir Hugh, at least, could not gaze upon unmoved.

Mr. Hillyard seemed also to derive pleasure in watching the two, or, rather, the one, for Miss Constance was his sister, and he knew that little rose-bud mouth could say very hard things, and that the fair forehead was occasionally contracted with a frown.

When Sir Hugh presently escorted Miss Hillyard to the piano there was silence, while she went through a dashing *Bravura*, and then, at Sir Hugh's urgent request, favoured them with an air from an Italian opera, which was, of course, charming.

After a good deal of persuasion Miss Constance allowed herself to be placed at the piano, and after protesting that she was not accustomed to play without music, &c., &c., played and sang very creditably.

To Sir Hugh's surprise, Marion refused to sing at his request. He gently urged her, thinking her refusal arose from girlish hesitancy before strangers.

She answered, very politely, but with a tone in her voice he had never before heard:

"No, Sir Hugh. I cannot sing to-night."

The truth was, her heart was sore.

Meeting her old schoolmates had brought vividly back her former prosperity, and made her realise fully her dependent condition.

The evening passed pleasantly.

Plans for the coming day were discussed and a ride to the old ruins of Enderley Abbey finally agreed upon.

Sir Hugh was a capital host, and to all appearance enjoyed himself immensely.

After Miss Hillyard and her sister had retired to their own room the elder observed:

"I believe, Constance, you were over-devoted to your old schoolmate to-night. Surely you know who she is?"

"Yes. Her father was Doctor Elliott, but he is dead now, and when she was at school she had lovely dresses, and lots of spending money."

"Whoever she was at school she's nothing but Mrs. Charlton's companion."

"I don't believe it," said the younger sister.

"Who told you?"

"She did," said Miss Hillyard, "when I inquired of her if she had been long at Dexley Hall."

"Companion or not," said the other, "you'd give anything to have Sir Hugh look at you as he did at her when he desired her to sing."

The next morning Marion found a decided difference in Miss Constance Hillyard's manner. She did not wonder at it, though she felt it a little bitterly.

She said to herself:

"Am I not the same girl I was two years ago?"

She declined to accompany the riding party, for Mrs. Charlton did not feel well enough to go, and Marion preferred to remain with her. While the other ladies were preparing for the ride she played and sang for Mr. Hillyard, and finished the impression her beauty had made the evening before.

During the ride Miss Hillyard found an opportunity to inform her brother of what she chose to call:

"Miss Elliott's true position in the house."

But all the answer that benighted individual returned was:

"What difference does that make?"

The guests remained three weeks.

All enjoyed, or at least seemed to enjoy, themselves.

Miss Hillyard treated Marion with patronising kindness that was almost intolerable to the proud young girl.

Constance was, by turns, agreeable and disagreeable.

Mr. and Mrs. Fenton were delighted and charmed with her.

As for John Hillyard, it was evident to all that he only wanted a little encouragement to propose to Marion; but she kept him resolutely at a distance.

At the end of a fortnight Sir Hugh announced, one morning at breakfast, that business required his presence in London the following morning.

He must, therefore, beg his guests to excuse him that day and the next, as he would be obliged to leave by the noon train.

When the meal was finished he went to the library to write letters.

Marion declined Miss Constance's offer to practice duets on the plea of having a letter to write, and went to her own room.

A few minutes later, however, Miss Hillyard, whose room was near the library, heard a slight footfall pass her door and pause near that of the library.

All her curiosity was aroused.

She stepped from her window to the wide balcony, which ran along the entire side of the main building, and paused near the open window of the library. There she heard a tap at the library door.

"Come in," said the voice of Sir Hugh Dexley. Marion entered, shy and confused. The baronet sprang to his feet at once. "What an unexpected pleasure," he exclaimed.

Marion, speaking a little quicker than usual, and blushing vividly, interrupted:

"I will not take up your time, Sir Hugh," she said. "But you know Mrs. Charlton's birthday comes next month, and I wish to make her a little present," at the same time unrolling some silver paper. "This is a hand screen I worked last year, and I want to ask you to take it to London, and leave it at some shop, to be made up."

"I shall be more than pleased to take it. How beautiful it is, said Sir Hugh."



And so in truth it was. On a ground of palest violet, rested a single spray of fuchsias, the crimson and white bells contrasting well with the glossy green leaves, and bringing into bold relief the ruby-throated humming bird, poised before the central bell.

"I think it very pretty," said Marion, frankly, as she rolled up the tiny parcel; "but you understand my difficulties about it, Sir Hugh. I could not get it made up in Bycliffe. I did not know where to send it, and I could not ask Mrs. Charlton, for I did not wish her to know anything about it."

"I understand it all," said Sir Hugh, smiling, "and that nothing but stern necessity compelled you to ask me." As she turned to leave the room, he said, quietly, "You must say good-bye to me now, for I am going away before luncheon."

"Good-bye, Sir Hugh."

But he paused an instant, with his hand on the door he was about to open for her, and said:

"You are going to shake hands with me, are you not?"

"Certainly, Sir Hugh," and she held out the little, warm, soft hand he had so longed to touch.

As he held it for an instant a strong desire came over him to tell her that he loved her, but he feared it would be premature, so, saying, simply, "good-bye," he bent over and kissed the little hand resting in his own.

Marion gave one quick, startled glance as she drew her hand away, and left him with the colour in her cheeks changed to the deepest carnation.

As Sir Hugh closed the door behind her he fancied he heard a slight noise on the balcony outside the window, and, quickly crossing the room, was just in time to see the folds of Miss Hillyard's dove-coloured robe disappear through the window of her room.

"A remarkable coincidence, Miss Hillyard!" he said to himself. "So you were eaves-dropping, were you?"

Unmindful of his letters, Sir Hugh turned to the table, and unrolled the tiny parcel Marion had left there, for the mere pleasure of looking at the work her hands had wrought.

He was still standing there, when the door opened, and Miss Hillyard came in.

She stopped just inside the threshold, with a little cry of astonishment:

"I beg your pardon, Sir Hugh; I had no idea you were in the library. I felt in the mood for Tennyson this morning, and came in for Locksley Hall."

"Pray, do not mention it," said Sir Hugh, courteously. "Let me find the book for you," and he walked to one side of the large room, where the poets, from Chaucer down, held undivided sway.

At that instant Miss Hillyard discovered the bit of fancy work on the table, and exclaimed, rapturously:

"What a beautiful little screen! I never saw anything so lovely. Is it some of dear Mrs. Charlton's work, Sir Hugh?"

"No," returned the baronet; "it is intended for Mrs. Charlton. I am going to take it to London, to have it made up—Ah, here is the volume containing Locksley Hall."

"Thanks, Sir Hugh. An revoir. A thousand pardons for having interrupted you," said Miss Hillyard, sweetly.

"A thousand pardons for having interrupted a man in the act of staring at a bit of woman's work!" exclaimed Sir Hugh, savagely, as he closed the door on his unwelcome visitor. "That is too much."

Dating from this day, Miss Hillyard took a violent liking to Miss Elliott, or pretended to. She talked with her, made room for her to sit beside her, during the long evenings, and was intensely interested in the numerous bits of fancy work in Marion's busy fingers.

Sir Hugh returned, and the last day but one of the guests' stay arrived.

Miss Hillyard was sitting in Marion's room that afternoon to learn some intricate stitch in fancy netting; while Mrs. Charlton and Sir

Hugh accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Fenton to the station; they being obliged to leave a day sooner than the others.

"Have you the hand screen for Mrs. Charlton's birthday yet?" asked Miss Hillyard, with an appearance of interest.

Marion looked up in astonishment.

"What hand screen do you refer to?"

"Why, the one you sent to London by Sir Hugh," said Miss Hillyard, serenely.

"How do you know I sent one to London?" asked Marion, impulsively.

"Sir Hugh told me himself," said Miss Hillyard, smiling, "and for your own good, Marion," she now spoke in a grave, elderly-sister fashion, "I would advise you not to be so intimate with Sir Hugh Dexley."

"I am not intimate, as you call it, with Sir Hugh Dexley," retorted Marion, crimson to the forehead at the accusation. "I asked him to take the screen to London, because I did not know where to send it; and he expressed himself as quite willing to take it."

"That is what I do not like in Sir Hugh," said Miss Hillyard, calmly. "He told me that he said to you, 'I shall be more than pleased to do it,' and then he said to me, 'it was too laughable to have her come to me, alone in the library, with such a request, as if a gentleman was in the habit of doing errands for his sister's servants.'"

"Did Sir Hugh say that?" cried Marion, with flashing eyes.

"Of course he did," said Miss Hillyard, "and I told him that he ought not to speak of you in that way; and he laughed and said, 'that if not a servant, you were, at least, only a companion.' Why, you dear little innocent," she went on, as Marion did not answer, "didn't you know it wasn't etiquette at all, even to think of making one's mistress a present? It seems to bespeak the hope of a return."

"I am sure Mrs. Charlton would not think of such a thing, in this case," said Marion, quietly, though her voice did not sound just as usual, "she has been very kind to me."

"I know it," said Miss Hillyard, sweetly. "And Sir Hugh treats you with much deference before people; but you know how satirical he is, and I assure you that, though I was angry with him, I could not help laughing, when he went through the farce of saying 'Good-bye to you,' as he called it."

"Are you telling me the truth, Miss Hillyard?" said Marion, as she arose and stood before her, white as any marble statue.

"My dear child," said Miss Hillyard, kindly, "what a question to ask. Who else could have told me the particulars of your interview? Were you not alone with him in the library? To prove to you that he showed me the screen, I can tell you the pattern; a spray of fuchsias, and a humming bird, on a violet ground. Don't look so white," continued she, still more kindly, "you did no real harm, it was a great blunder; and I thought it but just to tell you, before I went away."

"It was kind in you, Miss Hillyard," said Marion, the words coming slowly from her pale lips, and I am much obliged to you." Then, still more slowly, "I will be more careful in the future."

Miss Hillyard looked at her watch and gave an affected start.

"It's nearly five o'clock," she said. "How the time has slipped away! I must go and dress for dinner," and as the estimable young lady stood a few minutes later before the large mirror in her room, she said, softly, "I believe I am a little pale myself. I did not know my nerves were so easily upset."

Marion saw Miss Hillyard pass out of the room; then walked with steady steps to the door, and turned the key; then locked the other door leading to Mrs. Charlton's room; and then sank down on the floor, covering her face with her hands. Oh! the agony of her humiliation. She said to herself again and again:

"It cannot be. She must have told me untruths." Then came the cruel thought: "It must be true. How else could she know of his having asked me to say good-bye to him

there? And he showed her the screen, that poor little bit of work. How cruel of him! What a hypocrite he must be, for he looked as if it would be a pleasure to him. And, perhaps, Mrs. Charlton is just the same. But no, it cannot be. She is too truly kind," and the poor child wept bitter tears.

How long she crouched there she never knew; but she was aroused by hearing a knock at the door and the voice of Mrs. Charlton's maid, saying:

"If you please, Miss Elliott, Mrs. Charlton bade me say dinner is ready."

Marion calmed herself by a mighty effort, and answered:

"Please tell Mrs. Charlton, Reid, that I have a headache, and cannot come down to dinner."

She heard the woman's retreating footsteps, and felt a vague wonder that she had not heard the dinner bell; had not even heard Mrs. Charlton, who must have spent some time in the adjoining room.

She then bathed her swollen face, took down the heavy masses of hair, and, after unlocking the door, threw herself on the bed. The storm had passed, and there only remained a bitter sense of injustice and injury.

After dinner was over Mrs. Charlton came to her with the maid, bringing hot tea, and a dainty bit of toast. She placed her hand gently on Marion's hot forehead, and said:

"I'm sorry your head aches. I thought you were proof against that terrible malady."

"I very seldom have the headache," said poor Marion, faintly, "but it is very bad to-night," and she sat up to try and drink the tea. But there was an odd choking in her throat that made it almost impossible to swallow, and, after drinking a very little, she put the cup down, saying, "I cannot drink any more."

Mrs. Charlton looked uneasily at the white face and pale lips, and said, "May I not send to the village for Dr. Tate? I am afraid you are really ill."

"Oh, no," said Marion, quickly; "I assure you it's nothing serious. Very likely I shall be up, early to-morrow, and walk off the remains of it, but it's very bad now"—she added, wearily—"all I want is to go to sleep."

Kind Mrs. Charlton left her unwillingly, and went down to the drawing-room.

All professed themselves sorry to hear of Marion's illness, especially Miss Hillyard, who, seeing Sir Hugh's look of anxiety, thought, "If I am any judge of women, Sir Hugh, it will be sometime before you have another chance to speak alone, with that dark-haired girl, upstairs."

The next day, Marion was much better; in fact, she said the headache had entirely left her. Miss Hillyard bade her an affectionate good-bye, and felt no pang of regret at the sight of the pale face.

Sir Hugh, as in duty bound, accompanied his guests to the station, and when the train bore them away, he hastened back to Dexley Hall, happier than he had been for some time. But before many days, he found he had no chance of speaking alone to the girl he loved. Miss Hillyard had been correct in the judgment she had formed. Marion's early morning walk was discontinued. She read, and played, and sang, as before; and drove and walked with Mrs. Charlton; and what time Mrs. Charlton spent in her own room, Marion passed alone in hers.

Sir Hugh never found her alone in the breakfast room in the morning; never saw her alone; never heard the sweet voice in the drawing-room, unless Mrs. Charlton was also present.

There was a decided change in her manner towards him, though he could hardly tell in what it consisted.

She listened attentively to all he said to her; played and sang, what he requested in the evenings; and read aloud to Mrs. Charlton, in seeming indifference to his presence. It grew almost unbearable to the proud man.

Mrs. Charlton's birthday came, as the dull, November days were drawing to a close. That morning, at breakfast, Mrs. Charlton called on Marion to admire the exquisite cameos Sir Hugh had given her.

Afterwards, when Mrs. Charlton was sitting by the fire, in the morning-room, Marion came to her, with the dainty screen in her hand, and said, softly, "Dear Mrs. Charlton, here is my little gift if you will accept it."

"Thank you, Marion," said the elder lady, warmly. "It is perfectly lovely, and I shall prize it very much. Look, Hugh!" she added as her brother entered the room; "did you ever see anything equal to this?"

Sir Hugh took it in his hand, and admired the beautiful design; and Marion said, quietly:

"Sir Hugh has seen it before, Mrs. Charlton; he was kind enough to take it to London for me, to have it made up."

Sir Hugh looked at her, wonderingly.

"Had she forgotten that morning in the library?" he thought.

No, indeed, she had not forgotten, she never would forget—"the morning he dared to kiss my hand," she thought, bitterly.

After telling his sister not to expect him back before dinner, Sir Hugh took his gun, and left the house.

Mrs. Charlton went to Bycliffe Rectory, about two o'clock that afternoon, to attend one of the charitable meetings of which she was a member, and Marion wandered listlessly from room to room, and finally went to the drawing-room, to await Mrs. Charlton's return.

It was a dull, cheerless afternoon.

No rain was falling, but a heavy mist hung over the distant hills, and the east wind moaned dismally through the old trees in the park.

Marion went to one of the north windows, and, raising the sash, sat down before it, feeling inexpressibly desolate.

The damp wind, striking her hot face, was a blessing; it cooled the fever of her blood.

Suddenly the door opened, and in walked Sir Hugh.

Marion would have given worlds to have been in her own room.

She had never thought of the chance of his returning before Mrs. Charlton; but she was too proud to run away, and so she sat quite still, with one hand resting on the window sill.

Sir Hugh's delight, at finding her alone, was so great that at first he did not notice the open window.

When he did, he spoke earnestly.

"Surely, Miss Elliott, you have not been sitting opposite that window any length of time?" he said.

"No, Sir Hugh. Only for a few moments," answered Marion. "I have not been out to-day, and I wanted to feel the fresh air."

"Then pray put a shawl around you, and let me take you out on the balcony," said he, earnestly, "where there is no draught. You will certainly catch cold here."

"Thanks! But I am very comfortable," replied Marion, indifferently.

Sir Hugh stood for an instant, looking at the young girl, then said, once more:

"Do let me put the window down;" and he spoke very gravely.

At that moment, the spring which held the window in place gave way, and the heavy sash came down on Marion's wrist, which rested on the window sill.

Sir Hugh sprang forward, and in an instant released the hand.

But there was a terrible mark across the white wrist, and the blood oozed freely from the wound.

Marion, uttering a low cry of pain, grew white to the lips.

"Is it broken?" asked Sir Hugh, looking almost as pale as his companion.

"No, I think not. I will go and and get Reid to do it for me."

She rose, but staggered from faintness, and had to sit down again.

"You will do no such thing," said Sir Hugh, firmly, at the same time wrapping his handkerchief loosely around her wrist. "If you try to walk you will faint. If your wrist is not broken I will dress it myself."

Then, taking her arm just above the wrist in one hand, he clasped the fingers of her hand in

his, and gently bent it at the wrist, holding the arm quite steady.

"Sir Hugh," cried Marion, great drops of pain starting out on her forehead, "please don't do that again. I cannot bear it."

"I wished to satisfy myself that the wrist was not broken," answered Sir Hugh. "You bore it heroically. Now, you must sit here while I go for a bandage."

He left the room, and in a few minutes returned with a glass of wine in one hand, and some linen and a bottle in the other.

"You are to drink this wine first," and, as he held it towards her, Marion received it in her trembling hand, and swallowed it without a word.

He wet the linen with arnica, and said:

"Can you bear additional pain, Miss Elliott? This will smart when the skin is broken, but do the bruise more good than anything else."

Then he gently removed the handkerchief, and placing the wet linen around the poor little wrist, wrapped the bandage carefully over it, looking anxiously in Marion's face to see the effect of what he knew must be excruciating pain.

Marion said not a word, but once or twice a low moan was wrung from her lips; and large tears rolled down her face.

These quiet tears touched Sir Hugh more than anything else could, and he said:

"I wish I could bear it for you."

Marion looked up, and spoke with an evident effort.

"Don't pity me. You knew it was all my own fault."

"But that does not make the pain any easier to bear."

"What is it?" inquired Sir Hugh, as she tried to rise.

"I am cold, I want to go to the fire," answered Marion.

"That can be managed very easily," and stepping behind the large arm-chair, in which she sat, Sir Hugh wheeled it across the room to the fire; then, going into the hall, brought a heavy shawl and placed it around her shoulders.

"Is that more comfortable?" he said.

Marion drew the shawl more closely around her and shivered, but said nothing.

There was silence for a few minutes, then Sir Hugh spoke:

"I must put more arnica on your wrist," and, sitting down on a low ottoman before her, he took the cold, trembling hand in his and arranged the linen and bandage to his own satisfaction; but when he finished, he did not relinquish the cold fingers, but held them in his own warm hand.

As Marion tried to withdraw her hand he said, very earnestly:

"Let me hold your hand a few minutes, while I tell you of my love for you."

Amazed, indignant, believing herself mocked, Marion, forgetful of the pain, snatched her hand away, and exclaimed:

"How dare you? How dare you speak so, Sir Hugh?"

Sir Hugh drew himself up, haughtily.

"What have I done," he said, "that my love, the love of an honourable man, should be an insult to you, Miss Elliott?" Then, seeing the agonised look on her pale face, he continued, but in a different tone: "Forgive me for speaking so hastily: you do not know what I have suffered the past few weeks. There must be some reason for your changed conduct, for your speaking as you did just now. Why do you dislike me so much?"

Marion looked at the handsome face before her, and the remembrance of the insulting words Sir Hugh had spoken rose before her. She answered coldly, even scornfully, speaking slowly and distinctly:

"You are not an honourable man, Sir Hugh Dexley."

A deep flush shot over his face.

"You must never say those words again," he said, sternly. "I will not bear them, even from you. You have no right to say them. I am honourable and true. What do you mean?"

Marion spoke quickly:

"All that is necessary, to end this conversation at once and for ever, will be for me to tell you that Miss Hillyard was kind enough to tell me what you said to her. How you rehearsed the amusing scene of my going to the library to you to ask you to take the little screen to London. How you told her that gentlemen were not often called upon by servants to do such errands. How you kindly explained, when she told you, that you ought not to speak of me in that way, that I was, if not a servant, at least not much better, being only a companion."

Sir Hugh was unutterably astonished.

"And you believe I told that to Miss Hillyard?" he cried, interrupting the rapid words. "No wonder you hate me."

"I know you told her so," said Marion. "She even described the pattern of the screen you showed her. Now, I had never unrolled it here till I took it to you that morning: so no one else saw it; who could have told her? Oh! how could you be so cruel!" and she broke off with a great gasping sob.

A torrent of feeling swept over Sir Hugh. To think that this little orphan girl should have been made to believe such things of the man who loved her. No wonder she had avoided him. No wonder she had told him he was not honourable.

He raised his right hand.

"Miss Elliott," he said, solemnly, "I swear before heaven that the story Isabel Hillyard told you was false in every detail. I never spoke of our interview in the library to any living soul. I have treasured it in my memory too solemnly for that. I can explain to you her knowledge." And then he recounted how she came into the library.

He now once more took the little maimed hand in his and said, tenderly:

"You must listen to me now, Marion, while I tell you of my love. I loved you the first day I saw you—the first night I heard you sing. Day by day since I have felt that I could ask no greater happiness than to win you for my wife. I offer you all the love of my heart. Be my wife. You hold all my hopes in this little hand;" and he gently touched her right hand, which lay on her lap.

Marion sat quite still and did not answer, even when he repeated his question. But when he said, "Tell me, my darling," she placed her right hand in his, glancing up at him shyly, and suffused with blushes.

For an instant there was silence, then Sir Hugh drew her to his side; their eyes met, and then their lips met in the first kiss of acknowledged love.

Half an hour afterwards, after Mrs. Charlton came home, she was shocked to see Marion sitting before the fire, wrapped in a large shawl, with her bandaged hand resting on her lap. Sir Hugh was standing by the mantelpiece.

"My dear child, what has happened?" cried Mrs. Charlton, anxiously.

"I have been very foolish," answered Marion. "I raised one of the windows, and sat down before it, with my hand on the sill. I suppose I could not have fastened the spring properly, for it came down with a crash on my wrist."

"One of these heavy windows," exclaimed Mrs. Charlton. "I wonder it did not break your wrist. Who dressed it for you?"

"Sir Hugh," replied Marion, "he came in just before it happened."

"Yes," said that gentleman. "I had no right then to prevent this little girl from injuring herself; but I have taken her under my own protection now. You see this, Anna?" he added, triumphantly, holding up something to his sister's view.

"What! The Dexley ruby?" cried Mrs. Charlton.

"Yes. The Dexley ruby," and, bending before the blushing Marion, he took her hand in his; and in a moment there glittered on her slender finger the glowing ruby, with which, for generations, the Dexleys had betrothed their brides. "Marion is to be my wife, God bless her!"

When Miss Hillyard received the wedding cards of Sir Hugh and Lady Dexley, cards which



we are obliged to say the baronet took great pleasure in sending, she omitted the usual letter of congratulation.

She knew that there must have been an explanation regarding the conversation on that October day, when she had represented Sir Hugh as having spoken of his beautiful bride as "only a companion." M. T. S.

## FACETIÆ.

### SHEESONABLE.

AN accomplished individual named Jenery Shee is now amongst us, giving lectures in four or five different languages. "Jenery" looks to us so like a mixture of "Jenny" and "Henry," that we are quite puzzled as to the sex of the learned lecturer, and inclined to inquire, "Is Shee he, or she Shee, or how?"

—Funny Folks.

### OH, LAW.

Has the strike of the masons been followed by a similar act on the part of the legal fraternity? 'Tis manifestly so, otherwise why this rush of foreign advocates, for we read in the manifest of "Arkshaw" from Singapore, that "125 his. Penang lawyers" have arrived.

—Fun.

### AN INSTITUTION.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY is not oversweet upon Technical Education, because, as a rule, it means limiting a man's general knowledge; but, of course, this difficulty can be got over. At an establishment in Regent Street you can have a Polytechnical education.

—Fun.

### AMBIGUOUS.

A CONTEMPORARY has an advertisement for "a plain cook in a quiet gentleman's family." The gentleman may be quiet enough, but how about the family?

—Fun.

### THREE GUIDES TO THE MONEY MARKET.

RUSSIAN "Advances," Turkish "Principles," and British "Interests."

—Fun.

### AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE.

A LATMAN having lately written to the Bishop of Lincoln to know why the Bishop turned to the East at the end of his sermon, C. Lincoln answers:

"I was not aware of having done what you say was the case; and may I be allowed to add that it would not have been worth while noticing if I had done it? Life is not long enough for debates on such trivialities."

Hear! hear! hear! That "Punch" should find himself heartily saying, "Ditto to C. Lincoln!"

### LIKELY ENOUGH.

THE scenery for "Ray Blas," it is said, was painted on paper and sent to England from Milan, the only English brush employed in the production being the paste-brush, by means of which it was transferred to canvas. The intention was, of course, to save expense. The innovation will bring Milanese and other foreign painters into close competition with the English brethren of the brush, and probably make the latter feel rather Milancholy.

—Punch.

### AT LAST.

TEMPLE Bar is positively, really, certainly going, and no mistake this time. Moreover, Mr. Barnum had made a bid for a portion of the Bar, as he covets the three figures and ornaments. It is rumoured that the Corporation, bearing in mind the recent adventures of Cleopatra's Needle, have some idea of entertaining Mr. Barnum's proposition, if he will accept the whole Bar, and undertake to ship it bodily off to the Bay of Biscay—and wait there for a storm. But this wants confirmation.

—Punch.

THE TWO DIFFICULTIES OF THE DAY.—MacMahon's to get a Ministry, and St. Andrew's to get a Lord-Rector.

—Punch.

### GOOD TEMPLARS.

A NUMEROUS assembly of Members of the United Kingdom Alliance was held the other

night at Exeter. The "Times" reports it in a paragraph headed "Riotous Meeting." That is commonly the character of a Temperance Meeting convened to clamour for paternal legislation. But what rendered this course of Teetotalers remarkable was that they met "under the presidency of Bishop Temple." Now then it is possible to conceive the sense of a denomination assumed by a section of total abstiners, who, in calling themselves "Good Templars," may be supposed to mean not any invidious comparison with the Knights Templars of old, or any of the present residents in Pump Court and its purlieus, but a compliment to the Bishop of Exeter, ascribing goodness to Temple. On the occasion of holding a Chapter of their Order, and a Symposium, an appropriate toast and water for the Good Templars would be "Temple and Teapot!"

—Punch.

## BUSY MADELINE.

WELL-A-DAY! Ah! well-a-day!  
I have lost my heart so gay,  
Lost it to sweet Madeline.  
For I nothing do but sigh  
Since I passed her window by,  
Though the sun is in the sky—  
Little Madeline.

There I saw, by candle light,  
In an apron dainty white,  
Charming, helpful Madeline.  
Muslin fillet on her head,  
And, though lady-born ('tis said),  
With her fair hands making bread,  
Busy Madeline.

As the pearly flour she sifts,  
Elbow deep in snowy drifts,  
Pretty, rosy Madeline—  
Cupid, with his eyes of blue,  
Whispers shyly (would 'twere true),  
Sometime she'll make bread for you—  
Bonnie Madeline.

Then uprose a vision bright—  
Fair green fields, a cottage white,  
In it, gentle Madeline.  
Not arrayed in silken dress,  
But in simple loveliness;  
All my own to cheer and bless—  
Pretty Madeline.

Ah! I fear my dream will fail,  
And my star of hope grow pale,  
Spite of love for Madeline.  
Yet, although I ne'er may wed,  
This sweet thought runs through my  
head:

Dimpled fingers making bread—  
Darling Madeline.

M. A. K.

## GEMS.

MAN wastes his mornings in anticipating his afternoons, and wastes his afternoons in regretting his mornings.

If the storm of adversity whistles around you, whistle as bravely yourself; perhaps the two whistles may make melody.

We love much more warmly by cherishing the intention of giving pleasure, than an hour afterwards when we have given it.

If you wish success in life, make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise counselor, caution your elder brother, and hope your guardian genius.

## STATISTICS.

THE CATHOLIC PRESS IN EUROPE.—A distinguished Catholic journalist of Wurzburg, in Bavaria, has published a very interesting pamphlet, entitled "The Catholic Press in Europe in 1877." Looking over it, we see at

once how Catholic journalism has developed and spread wherever the Cultur-Kampf has raged most violently. There are 398 Catholic journals published in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, having an aggregate circulation of 1,218,900 copies, or one copy for every twenty-five inhabitants. They are divided as follows:—Austria has eighty-seven journals, with a circulation of 143,800; Prussia, 149, with 379,900 circulation; Bavaria, seventy-seven journals, having 388,300; Switzerland, fifty-three, having 138,600; Saxony, three, and 1,700; Wurtemberg, eleven, and 42,700; Baden, twelve, and 69,400; Alsace Lorraine, one, with 10,000; Hesse, twelve, with 77,500; Oldenburgh, one, with 800; and Hamburg, one, with 700. Thus, we see that Prussia counts for thirty-five per cent. of the whole number, Austria for twenty-five, Bavaria, nineteen, Switzerland, fourteen, Baden and Hesse three, Wurtemberg two and three-fourths, and the remainder one-fourth. Comparing these figures with the population, we find that there is one copy of a paper to every three inhabitants in Hesse, one to eight in Switzerland, one to forty-three in Saxony, and one to 106 in Austria.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SIMPLE MODE OF PURIFYING WATER.—A tablespoonful of pulverised alum sprinkled into a hogshead of water (the water stirred at the same time) will, after a few hours, by precipitating to the bottom the impure particles, so purify it that it will be found to possess nearly all the freshness and clearness of the finest spring water. A pailful, containing four gallons, may be purified by a single teaspoonful of the alum.

QUINCE CORDIAL.—Take the parings and cores of the quince, when preserving, cover them with water, and boil one gallon down to half a gallon, and so proportion any quantity; when reduced in this way to a thick clear mucilage, strain carefully through a hair sieve; whilst hot, to one gallon of this mucilage add two pounds of crushed sugar; stir this well until dissolved; then add two quarts of best white brandy; pour this into very clear wine bottles, and into each bottle put four or five blanched bitter almonds; shake each bottle well, and cork tightly. In a week it is fit for use.

HAM CAKE.—A capital way of disposing of the remains of a ham, and makes an excellent dish for breakfast: Take one and a half pounds of ham fat and lean together; put it into a mortar, and pound it; or, if you have that invaluable auxiliary to a kitchen, a sausage machine, pass it through the latter; boil a large slice of bread in half a pint of milk, and beat it up and the ham well together; add an egg beaten up. Put the whole into a mould, and bake it a rich brown.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

SOME Jersey fishermen report the discovery of a bed of oysters on the west coast of the island.

ALREADY 500 houses in New York converse with one another, and throughout the States 3,000 telephones are in use.

THE opening of the Paris Salon will be on the 15th, instead of on the 1st of May, the usual day. The closing of the Exhibition is appointed for the 15th of July.

THE Municipal Council of Paris have before them a proposal to make a lake and fountain in the Montsouris Park, which, when finished, will have cost 1,750,000 francs.

THE following list contains the names and ages of all unmarried heirs-apparent to dukedoms: Marquis of Hartington, 44 years; Marquis of Worcester, 30 years; Marquis of Kildare, 26 years; Marquis of Stafford, 26 years; and the Marquis of Carmarthen, 15 years; Earl of Lincoln, 13 years; Earl of Burford, 7 years, and the Marquis of Tulli-bardine, 6 years. Among the unmarried heirs presumptive to dukedoms are Mr. Henry Wellesley, M.P., 31 years, and Lord Archibald St. Maur, 67 years.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**THORAX.**—Keating's Cough Lozenges are admittedly excellent remedies. Considerable alleviation of irritation invariably attends their employment. Any chemist will supply you with a box at one shilling and three-halfpence or two shillings and ninepence, according to size.

**ALFRED JAMES.**—Your friend is wrong. It certainly would be grammatically correct to say "Mr. Gladstone saved the tree down, then delivered an address," or, "Having saved down the tree the right honourable gentleman turned to his admirers," &c.

**F. A. B.'s** Serenade is unsuitable by reason of its serious defects. The second and fourth lines of the first verse rhyme, though the first and third do not, which, however, is not important; but in each of the other verses the third and fourth lines rhyme while the first and second do not. The effect is peculiar, especially when combined with the fact that essential words have been left out to meet the exigencies of rhythm.

**ANNE.**—A celebrated naturalist spent many sleepless nights for the purpose of discovering the means by which that mysterious little insect called the "death-watch" produced the ticking sound about which you inquire. He ascertained that it was only a small beetle, and the peculiar ticking sound was produced by the insect striking its hind leg against the wall. The superstition that this noise foreboded instant death to some one in the house has entirely died out.

**PERFLECKED.**—Too much grease is injurious to the skin and hair. Try a lotion which contains none. For instance, Mrs. Batchelor's Hair Colour Restorer, which is one of the best hair washes in existence, and, at 1s. per bottle, is also one of the cheapest. It is prepared by E. H. Millard and Sons, 40, Charterhouse Square, E.C., but may be had of all chemists or perfumers.

**PHILIP.**—Yes, Pongo is dead. The name orang-outang, in Africa, is rang-atou, which signifies wild man. There was once a popular but of course erroneous belief that orang-outangs were men, who refused to speak lest they should be made to work.

**EMILY ANN.**—Fortune-telling, as it is called, is a mere pretence and generally a downright fraud. No one can predicate your fortune or fathom your destiny. Neither do we believe in the assumption that character can be interpreted by handwriting.

**HUGH.**—Your only alternative is to leave the field to your rival, as you regard him. There is no way in which you can compel the young lady to bring her correspondence with him to a close if she refuses to do so at your request. She seems to have made her choice between you.

**HELENE.**—As you are nineteen and your fiancé twenty-eight you need have no fear that such disparity in age will interfere with the happiness of married life. If the weight of years were on your side instead of your lover's very considerable reflection would be advisable before entering upon such an important contract.

**ANDREW C.**—The recommendation from your employer should merely state that while in his employment he found you honest, capable, faithful, and industrious. The briefer such documents are the better.

**A CONSTANT READER.**—The only connection between Selkirk and "Robinson Crusoe" is that the actual experience of Selkirk is supposed to have suggested to Defoe the imaginary adventures related of his hero.

**ARTHUR.**—Crickets originated in England and we think has been an existing sport for about one hundred and thirty years. It was first mentioned in history in the reign of George II.

**MARIAN.**—To stop bleeding at the nose exercise the jaws as if in the act of mastication. In the case of a child give it something to chew—a piece of paper, for instance. The motion of the jaws will soon stop the flow of blood. It is a sure remedy, simple as it seems.

**EUGENIE.**—Velvet was originally an Asiatic production, introduced into Rome at the time of the emperors. It was not known to the ancient Greeks. In the middle ages some manufactories of velvet were established at Constantinople. Two Genoese under the auspices of Francis I. commenced making this fabric at Lyons in 1536.

**STANLEY.**—It is well known that the main stream of the Nile is supplied by the great equatorial lakes of Africa, and that the annual inundations are caused by the tush of torrent water laden with soil from the fertile

slopes of the Abyssinian plateau in July, August, and September. This silt is now for the most part being deposited in the bed of the Mediterranean, where it is gradually forming a new delta similar to that already made at the river's mouth.

**J. J. E.,** twenty-five, medium height, fair, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady. Must be about twenty, brown hair and eyes, fair, good-looking.

**E. S. and E. F.,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. E. S. is nineteen, tall, light hair, blue eyes. E. F. is twenty, tall, dark hair, good-looking, fond of children.

**MARIA,** nineteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about twenty-one, good-looking, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

**W. F. N.,** twenty-seven, fond of home, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

**L. M.,** twenty-one, curly hair, blue eyes, tall, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty-two, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

## BE FAITHFUL FOR EVER.

When you twain shall be wedded,  
And plighted your troth,  
When God's benediction  
Descends on you both,  
Whether "born to the purple,"  
Or born to be free,  
Be faithful for ever—  
'Tis Heaven's decree.

Though you oft may be tempted,  
Through trial and pain,  
To sever the union,  
To unlink the chain,  
Remember an angel  
Hath written above,  
In characters lasting,  
Your record of love.

Though you wander as strangers  
Estranged and apart,  
Though you give to another  
Your hand and your heart,  
Though all earthly tribunals  
Pronounce you as twain,  
Your oath still unblotted,  
On high will remain.

Oh! for his sake, the dear one,  
That stood by your side—  
For her sake, "thelpmeet"  
So lately a bride!  
For the children's sweet sakes,  
Who are happy to-day,  
Turn not to strange idols  
That crumble to clay.

Forbear, then, rash husband,  
Forbear, angry wife!  
For sunshine and shadow,  
Must fill up this life!  
"To be good, and do good,"  
Till labour is done;  
Be faithful for ever  
As when you begun!

K. A. K.

**HUGH C.,** twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen.

**E. J. P., L. O. E., and C. H. C.,** three friends, wish to correspond with three seamen in the Royal Navy. E. J. P. is twenty-two, tall, dark. L. O. E. is twenty-one, dark. C. H. C. is twenty-four, fair. Respondents must be about twenty-five.

**CLARE LOWER DECK and PIPE DINNERS,** two sailors in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Sisters preferred. Clear Lower Deck is twenty-one, medium height. Pipe Dinner is twenty-one, tall, fair, brown eyes. Respondents must be fond of home and music.

**RICARDO,** nineteen, grey eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady.

**JENNIE and LIZIE,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Jennie is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, medium height, domesticated. Lizie is eighteen, good-looking, dark eyes, medium height. Must be between twenty and twenty-four.

**L. F.,** thirty, would like to exchange carte-de-visite with a young lady.

**EUPHEMIA L.,** twenty-five, a widow, would like to correspond with a gentleman.

**ELIZABETH,** seventeen, brown hair, blue eyes, wishes to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty, tall, dark.

**LAURA S.,** twenty-three, medium height, fair, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-eight, good-looking.

**W. L.,** twenty-five, a miner, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Must be thoroughly domesticated, and fond of home and children.

**PRIMROSE and DAISY,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Primrose is twenty, medium height, fair, dark blue eyes, good-looking. Daisy is twenty, tall, brown hair, dark eyes, and fond of home. Both are domesticated.

**C. S. and W. B.,** two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young women with a view to matrimony. C. S. is tall, light hair, fond of home and dancing. W. B. is tall, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

**NELLO and AGNES,** sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty. Nello is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing, good-looking. Agnes is seventeen, fond of home and music, medium height, dark blue eyes, considered good-looking.

**ROVING BILL and DASHING TOM,** two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies about eighteen, with a view to matrimony. Roving Bill is twenty-one, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, good-looking. Dashing Tom is twenty-four, medium height, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children.

**LILLIAN A.,** handsome, golden hair, blue eyes, good-tempered, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. Must be loving.

**PHYLLIS,** twenty-four, fair, good-looking, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, dark, medium height, good-looking, and fond of home.

**BRIDGET D.,** dark hair and eyes, good-looking, domesticated, fond of home and children, wishes to correspond with a gentleman about thirty.

**H. H. H.,** twenty-five, medium height, dark, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady, fair, loving.

**EMILY and EMMA,** two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Emily is twenty, fair, dark blue eyes. Emma is seventeen, dark brown hair, good-looking. Respondents must be about twenty-three, tall, fond of home, good-looking, and of very loving dispositions.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**DANIEL** is responded to by—**A. C.,** twenty, brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fair, good-looking, and domesticated.

**ANNIE** by—**Arthur G. C.,** medium height, brown hair and eyes, dark.

**MACDUFF** by—**Laura B.,** nineteen, fond of home and music.

**GRINDON** by—**Lizzie C.,** good-looking.

**LOO** by—**Alfred,** twenty.

**LOWEY ANNIE** by—**Sheet-Ancher Jack.**

**MIRIAM** by—**David L.,** twenty-four, fair, medium height, loving.

**ALBERT** by—**Ethel,** nineteen, tall, fair, auburn hair, blue eyes.

**HENRY** by—**May,** eighteen, light hair, brown eyes, and good-looking.

**ELIZA** by—**Tommy Tucker.**

**SELINA** by—**J. B.**

**MARIE** by—**Robert McG.**

**BRITTA** by—**Mike,** twenty-eight, medium height, and dark.

**KATHLEEN** by—**Joe,** twenty-five, tall, dark, and good-looking.

**JANE** by—**Konward,** eighteen, good-tempered, fond of home and music.

**HELEN** by—**Casabuccio,** seventeen, dark, medium height, fond of home.

**HAMBURG** by—**E. A. B.,** twenty, fair, loving, thoroughly domesticated.

**O. L. M. by—**Lena, eighteen, dark hair, and good-tempered.

**VOYAGER** by—**Only Me,** fair, very fond of home and music.

**MAGIE** by—**George M.,** twenty, dark brown hair, of a loving disposition.

**EMMA** by—**William D. E.,** twenty-two, of a loving disposition, blue eyes.

**BETTY** by—**T. R.**

**LILLIAN** by—**T. C. H.**

**L. W. by—**Milly, seventeen, hazel eyes, good-tempered, fair.

**EMILIE** by—**F. P.**

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